



CHINESE LACQUER

TO RICHARD FAIRBROTHER STRANGE
IN CHINA



FRONTISPIECE

CHINESE LACQUER

BY EDWARD F. STRANGE

LATE KEEPER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WOODWORK
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

THRONE of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung. In carved red lacquer, cut through to inner layers of light and dark olive-green, brown and yellow. The seat in flat lacquer with brocade cushion. Height, 3 ft. 11 in.; width, 4 ft. 1½ in.; depth, 3 ft. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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INTRODUCTION

Lacquer-ware is perhaps the most characteristic of the Chinese Industrial Arts ; for, in the proper sense of its accepted name, it belongs exclusively to that nation and to their pupils, the Japanese. Yet the study of it has been curiously neglected in spite of the popularity of the European imitations of two centuries and a half. This is probably due to the difficulties of an intricate technique and the use of a material unknown, for practical purposes, outside the zone of its origin. Pottery is of universal use and everyone is familiar with it, in one form or another. Lacquer-ware, on the other hand, is, for us, always an exotic. Had we the intimate knowledge of its fine qualities that we possess of ceramic wares, one might safely assume that lacquer would hardly be valued in less degree than the productions of the Chinese potter. The purpose of this volume is, so far as may be, to bring the story of Chinese lacquer before the public in definite form ; and, perhaps, to lay a foundation on which other students may build.

There is room for much further research, especially in the almost unexplored mass of Chinese literature. Japanese experts, who have never been lacking in respect for the source of so much that is best in the arts of their own country, are, I believe, now devoting serious attention to this work ; and I am indebted especially to the commentary of Mr. Imaizumi of the Imperial Museum, Tōkyō, for valuable information of this sort, published in the *Kokka*. The indebtedness of all students of the arts of China to the late Dr. Stephen W. Bushell, is too great to be acknowledged adequately in mere words. I had the privilege, in his later years, of his acquaintance ; and I would like to pay my inadequate tribute to the generosity with which he placed his great knowledge at the disposal of anyone who was really interested in the subjects he made his own. I have been allowed by the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office to quote from the excellent chapter on lacquer in the Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook on Chinese Art, written by Dr. Bushell ; and, by the Director and Secretary of the Museum, to reproduce photographs of a number of objects in that collection—now, perhaps, one of the best in any public institution. My thanks are also due to Dr. Perceval Yetts, Mr. Reynolds Stephens, Mr. James Orange, Mr. Ernest Rennie and Mrs. Cooper for permission to illustrate examples in their collections and to Messrs. Spink and Sons, Ltd., for the same privilege in connection with a number of fine specimens from the remarkable exhibition held by them in June, 1925. The Trustees of the British Museum kindly permitted me to illustrate the interesting beaker figured in Plate 46 ; and Mr. Freeman Smith to reproduce photographs of details of the Emperor Leopold the First's screen (Plate 35). And particularly I must

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thank Mr. G. Koizumi for assistance in translations from Japanese publications and for the liberal way in which he placed his great knowledge of the technique of lacquer at my disposal ; Mr. Arthur Waley for his valuable translations of the Chinese poems ; and Mr. Percy Bunt, of the Victoria and Albert Museum Library, for help with the Bibliography.

I would only add that the attributions of date in this volume must, to some extent, be taken as conjectural. They are based on very careful comparison of a considerable number of examples of lacquer-ware with some thought for style as expressed in other forms of Chinese Art. But there exists very little absolute evidence on this point and at present only an opinion can generally be given. After all, what matters is the artistic value of an object ; and, as to that, one hopes the selection now made may prove to be acceptable.

EDWARD F. STRANGE.

1925.

CHAPTER I

THE TECHNIQUE OF CHINESE LACQUER

The nature of the lacquer of the Far East, as used in China, Japan and Korea, is by no means generally well understood on account of the confusion that has arisen owing to the application of the term to a number of substances or preparations which differ in all essentials except that, in their final form, they present some sort of superficial polish. Indian lac is the gummy deposit of an insect, the *Coccus Lacca*; and, as shellac or stick lac, has, apart from its use in the countries of its origin, been well known in Europe ever since the earliest beginnings of trade with India. In Burma, lacquer-ware has been made from the sap of the *Melanorrhæa usitatissima*, the process having some analogies with that now to be described, and although this cannot be compared, for quality, with the Chinese or Japanese products, it, perhaps, of all other methods, comes nearest to them in technique. Apart from these natural products, the term is loosely applied to various artificial imitations of the Eastern commodity, consisting of solutions of resins or gums in turpentine, etc. This is the basis of that European lacquer which had so great a vogue from the end of the 17th century onwards; and still engages the attention of collectors, as well as of those makers of lacquered furniture who find it profitable to invest modern reproductions with—as one of them phrased it—“human interest,” by imparting to them a very clever and deceptive appearance of age.

The lacquer with which we are concerned has (with the not very important Burmese exception) very little in common with any of these; and one must regret that no distinctive term has yet been agreed upon to differentiate it from its imitations. Chinese and Japanese lacquer is the sap of a tree, the *Rhus vernicifera* (*ch'i shu*), which is indigenous to China and is cultivated throughout the Central and Southern provinces. Paléologue¹ mentions also *Angia Sinensis* as producing equally good lacquer and states that a lower grade is obtained from *Dryandria Cordata* and *Rhus Semialata*; but the late Dr. Stephen W. Bushell, who had both the opportunity and the scientific knowledge necessary for accurate observations does not mention these; and they may be disregarded. The *Rhus vernicifera* seems not to have been native to Japan; but must have been introduced into that country from China or Korea at a very early date, certainly not later than the 6th century of our era.

¹ *L'Art Chinois*, 1887.

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The tree is tapped in summer when about ten years old, horizontal incisions being made from the foot of the trunk upwards, and in groups, alternately, from left to right. At this stage, the sap is a white or greyish viscous fluid which darkens and hardens rapidly on exposure to the atmosphere. It is collected into large wooden air-tight vessels; and before use is strained through hempen cloth to remove fragments of bark or other physical impurities. In order to get rid of an excess of water and to give it an even consistency, it is then stirred in a mild heat, or in sunshine. But for the addition, if required, of colouring matter, or of adulteration, it is then ready for use without further treatment; though the Jesuit Father Bonanni, writing early in the 18th century¹—a fairly accurate and conscientious observer—says that the Chinese mix with it a vegetable oil ("*appellée girgili*") pressed from seed and of the nature of linseed oil, warmed until it becomes rather yellow and thick, in the proportion of 60 drachms of oil to 60 ounces of sap. The mixture is stirred *au soleil* in a wooden vessel with a few drachms of vitriol to make it black. The Japanese do not use any method of this kind, but Bonanni's account is probably founded on fact and accounts for later stories of the mixture of oil with lacquer in order to render the latter fit for use. In any case, it is not necessary.

The characteristic constituent of lacquer has been given, by chemists, the name of *urushiol* (from the Japanese name of lacquer, *urushi*), the formula of which is said by Korschelt and Yoshida² to be $C_{14}H_{18}O_2$. A recent analysis by Professor K. Mijama³ puts the average of *urushiol* in Chinese lacquer as low as 55.84 per cent as compared with from 64.00 to 77.6 for the Japanese. This may be due to climatic differences, to inferior methods of cultivation of the tree, or to want of care in extracting the sap at the proper seasons or from trees of the best growth. Indeed, Bonanni says the Chinese do not cultivate the lacquer tree, and that they tap it at any age or size, even when it is "grand comme les pins et les sapins d'Europe"—but, again, this is probably a generalisation from incomplete information. Lacquer for common use or for export (a great deal has for some time been sent to Japan) is, doubtless, treated with little care and is certainly adulterated. But there is no reason to suppose that, for the best work, suitable material was not always selected. A series of the tools, etc., used in the process of preparing Japanese lacquer, with an illustration of the actual

¹ *Traité de la Composition de Vernis*, 1723.

² Korschelt (O.) and Yoshida (H.). "The Chemistry of Japanese Lacquer," Asiatic Soc. of Japan, *Trans. XII*, pp. 182, etc.

³ In *Japanese Art and Handicraft*, by H. L. Joly and K. Tomita, 1916, p. 50.

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gathering of the sap, is exhibited in Museum No. 1 of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew ; and will be of value to students, as the Chinese method may be taken as identical for all practical purposes.

The basis of lacquer-ware is almost always wood ; though porcelain, brass and white metal alloys were also occasionally used. Examples of these are described below. With such exceptions, and a few rare cases where objects are carved out of solid lacquer, it will be assumed that all the references in the text of this volume are to lacquer-ware of wood.

This is generally a sort of pine, of soft and even grain, worked, in the smaller pieces to an astonishing thinness and evenness of texture. Larger objects have, of course, sufficient substance for strength ; but never an excess. The accuracy and beauty of the curves of bowls, vases and the like are remarkable, especially in examples of considerable size. When the wooden fabric of the object has been finished, its surfaces are carefully smoothed ; all knots, pin-heads or projections of any kind reduced, cracks or other irregularities made good and luted, as well as the joins, with a composition of rice paste and lacquer, until all is as even as possible. A dressing of lacquer is then applied to fill up the pores of the wood and provide a base for the processes that follow. On this is applied a priming consisting of one or two coats of composition, made by mixing lacquer with finely ground burnt clay or similar material, which, when hard, is ground to a fine surface with whetstone. Some of the old writers have said that in this composition, the Chinese occasionally used pig's blood and powdered quicklime. It is quite possible ; and this is probably the foundation of the legend that inferior qualities of red lacquer are coloured with pig's blood instead of with cinnabar. In other cases of old Chinese flat lacquer a priming of oil only was used, which would account for the thinness and general inferiority of this ware as compared with that of the Japanese.

A period of at least twelve hours would be needed for the composition to be ready to receive its next coat, a layer of hempen cloth, linen, paper or—especially in the case of Foo-chow lacquer—silk. This is again smoothed with a knife, to receive several more dressings of fine composition, each being given time to harden, and to be ground to an even surface before the next application. On this, successive applications of lacquer are made until the required thickness is obtained ; it being clearly understood that each must dry and be ground fine before the next is laid on. In the case of flat lacquer the number of coats would have been, as a rule, less than was involved by the Japanese method ; but a substantial thickness was obtained, even by the Chinese, before the decorative artist began his

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work. The extent of the work involved in these preliminaries will be better realised when it is understood that each coat of lacquer, as applied, is only of about the thickness of a thin coat of paint ; and that this is further reduced by the repeated grinding and polishing operations.

The decoration of flat or painted lacquer, *hua ch'i* (as it may be conveniently termed in comparison with the carved lacquer shortly to be described), proceeds on similar lines. The design is painted on the prepared ground with lacquer coloured as required ; is allowed to harden, and is then again overlaid with a thin coat of clear lacquer. Gold dust may be incorporated at this stage ; though, in regard to the use of gold, the Chinese have never developed its possibilities to anything like the extent of the Japanese. On the other hand, they have made use of a far wider range of colours, including turquoise and slate-blue, several greens, a red as of wine-lees and a rose-red, white, aubergine or plum-colour and a brilliant yellow ; as well as the vermilion, brown, etc., favoured by their rivals. At the same time there is no doubt that the apparent neglect by the Chinese lacquerers, of the use of gold and silver was a matter of fashion rather than of knowledge. In *Hsui-shih-lu*, a manuscript on the Art of Lacquering written during the reign of the Emperor T'ien Ch'i (A.D. 1621-1628),¹ it is clearly stated that gold was used in fine powder, in coarse pieces like rice husks, filings (as in the Japanese *hirame*) and gold leaf—"in emulation of the beauties of Nature." In this respect gold was to be compared with the sun, and silver with the moon and the filings and small details adjusted with due regard to the principle of the greater in relation to the lesser dignity. Other technical details were suggestive of the stars and the wind ; while, in the design, the rocks were to be as thunder. Brushes (symbolical of rain) of horse hair, wild pig's hair or rat's hair, were used by the artists who did the decorative portion of the work.

What has been said with reference to the Chinese use of gold applies similarly to that of lacquer decoration in relief (the Japanese *takamakiye* and *hiramakiye*). This class of ornament certainly dates back to the period of the Ming Dynasty, and is mentioned in the *Hsui-shih-lu* ; which, in allegorical vein, compares it with the ups and downs of Nature. This relief is modelled with a putty made of lacquer, fine charcoal, white lead, lamp-black or similar substances with a proportion of camphor ; the effect of the latter being to facilitate the working. On this, further coats of lacquer are applied, hardened and polished.

At this stage a curious property of lacquer may be mentioned—one that

¹ Yūsaku Imaizumi, *Kokka*, No. 113, etc.

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might seem to involve a contradiction in terms. The hardening process which is so essential to every stage in the preparation of lacquer-ware is expedited and perfected by the presence of moisture ; and one may say with truth that the lacquer dries in a moist atmosphere. For this purpose the Japanese use damp boxes, or chambers, and the Chinese employ a similar expedient. The Ming manuscript referred to, states that the Chinese use a " cave " in the ground and place the objects therein at night, so as to get the benefit of the cool damp air. In this atmosphere, the lacquer acquires a degree of hardness that enables it to be polished with whetstone, bone-dust, etc. ; to be engraved with lines having the clean-cut precision of copper-engraving and to be carved like ivory or box-wood. It can, moreover, be given a polish which in brilliancy is not inferior to that of glazed porcelain or enamels.

The engraved work may be, as stated above, as delicate in line as dry-point ; or incised in bold lines heightened with colour for decorative purposes as in examples described below. There is no doubt that the similar Japanese method of decoration, called by them, *chinkinbori*, was directly derived from China—according to a leading Japanese authority, in the period A.D. 1716–1735. The Victoria and Albert Museum, however, possesses a Japanese example of this work which must be placed in the middle of the 17th century ; and this affords good ground for assuming that engraved or incised lacquer was made in China at least as early as the later Ming period.

But of all classes of Chinese ware, the carved lacquer, *tiao ch'i*, is not only the best known, but the most characteristic. In this, at least, the Chinese have never, admittedly, been rivalled even by the Japanese—and no one else has ventured to imitate it. This lacquer was built up in the manner already described ; but the process was continued until a much greater thickness was obtained—even approaching, in extreme cases, nearly to half an inch. When two or more colours were to be incorporated in the design, the layers of each had to be placed in the order in which they would ultimately be required ; and it was necessary that each layer should be of exactly uniform thickness. The precision with which that preliminary work was carried out can be seen from a cross section of a fragment exhibited in Room 41 of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Not until the whole mass was completed and of perfectly homogeneous texture could the cutting begin ; for this was done, inwards, from the surface. There was no modelling or building-up of ornament in the manner in which Western sculptors handle their clay.

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Very careful general instructions are given by the Ming writer. Knives of various patterns were used ; and these were to be kept sharp and well controlled, so that no slips should take place. The carving should be V-shaped in section, with clean, direct cuts, but carried out with restraint ; care being taken not to cut away too much lacquer at a time, so as to make the work "lean." There must be no hesitation. The writer advises that the sharp edges left in cutting the design should be polished down ; but this was not invariably done ; later, and especially during the reign of Ch'ien Lung, sharpness of the cutting seems to have been particularly aimed at. We are also told that an excess of colour rendered the lacquer brittle.

It is necessary here to correct one of the very few errors made by that great student of Chinese Art, Dr. Bushell—whose services cannot too highly be acknowledged. In his account of the process he says, "the crust *while still warm* is carved with a knife."¹ As will already have been seen, the lacquer was not only not applied warm, but the long and laborious process of building it up made this impossible. It was carved when not only cold, but hard ; although the ultimate degree of hardness would not be reached until after the work had been finished. One cannot refrain from pointing out here, even at the expense of some repetition, how wonderful was the craftsmanship which so ordered this cutting that, in the most minute and elaborate patterns, only the exact depth and no more was reached, to bring to the light of day the hidden layer of colour needed for the pattern, where more than one was in question. The colour most commonly found is vermilion (*tan-sha*), derived from cinnabar (red sulphuret of mercury). It varies in different specimens from an almost claret colour to a bright "sealing-wax" red. Other colours most frequently found in Chinese carved lacquer, are a deep green and a lighter olive-green, buff, brown and black ; more rarely, aubergine or plum-colour. Meyer says of cinnabar that it is "the basis of all the magic compounds prepared by the Taoist doctors," and plays a large part in Taoist alchemy. One may perhaps, therefore, recognise an abstruse symbolism in the favour given to lacquer of this colour.

One more detail of the technical process is worth recording, namely, that the workshop should be so constructed as to give the greatest possible protection from wind and dust—an obvious precaution, considering the nature of the material and of the work.

From very early times, carved lacquer has been closely and dangerously

¹ "Chinese Art," *V. and A. Museum Handbook*, ed. 1921, p. 118.

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imitated by the Chinese themselves. In Book VIII, under the heading *Ku ch'i ch'i lun*, of the *Ko ku yao lun*, a work on literary and artistic antiquities by Tsao Ch'ao, published in the reign of the founder of the Ming Dynasty, Hung Wu (A.D. 1387) and translated by Dr. Bushell,¹ we find the following reference to the subject :—" The imitations of carved red lacquer are made by working the design in relief with a kind of putty made of lime and simply lacquering it over with a coat of cinnabar lac ; hence the name of *tui hung* (painted red lacquer). The principal things made are sword rings and perfume cases of floral design, which are worth very little money. It is also called *chao hung* (plastered red) and is now very common at Ta-li Fu in the province of Yunnan." This putty would be the lacquer composition referred to earlier in this chapter, or something of a similar nature. Such imitations, generally of small-sized ware were certainly made throughout the whole period of good carved lacquer—and, although most of the examples one meets are not earlier than the time of Ch'ien Lung, it is advisable for the collector to be on his guard. A small chip with a knife will generally reveal the truth ; and show whether the red lacquer is really more than a thin coating over composition. With the latter, moreover, stamps were often used for the diaper ground ; and this can often be detected merely by close observation.

A third class of imitations, also of considerable antiquity, consists simply of carved wood with a heavy coat of lacquer. In appearance, this work is more deceptive than the latter. The designs are generally bold and with softened outlines, after the Ming style mentioned above ; and the carving is often admirably executed. But, again, a slight cut, if one is possible, or the examination of a break, with a strong lens, will generally reveal the nature of the work. The Japanese *Kamakura-bori* is in technique practically identical with this class of lacquer-ware, which no doubt inspired it. This is said to have been introduced into Japan about the end of the 12th century. The style disappeared at the end of the 16th century ; but was revived later on. It may here be convenient to remark that there is only a technical resemblance between *Kamakura-bori* and Chinese carved lacquer. The Japanese carved lacquer in the same way, though neither with the same skill nor to anything like the same extent, as the Chinese—the equivalents in the former country being known as *tsui-shu* (red) and *tsui-koku* (black). The method is said to have been introduced into Japan from China during the second half of the 15th century, by a Chinese lacquerer whose name is transliterated into Japanese characters reading Monniu.

¹ *Chinese Art*, p. 112.

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It was much favoured by the makers of *inrō* (medicine cases) during the 17th and 18th centuries ; and both the classes of imitation described above were freely practised in Japan. The Japanese composition was made of lacquer, glue, and wheat-flour or similar starchy material with some strengthening admixture. The Chinese no doubt instructed their pupils in this respect ; and it is reasonable to suppose that the methods of imitation were pretty much the same in both countries.

A favourite and very attractive method of decorating lacquer-ware was by the use of inlay of shell. This must have been one of the earliest forms of decoration used in China, for the Imperial Treasures at Nara in Japan, include examples, beyond question, Chinese, which date back at least to the 8th century of our era. For this purpose, various shells were employed—mother-of-pearl for large work, the nautilus, pear-shell and especially the sea-ear, *haliotis* (the Japanese *awabi*) and *Turbo cornutus* (Japanese *sazaye*), etc. From the sea-ear were obtained those charming effects of iridescent green, and blue, which, enriched with gold and silver and delicately engraved, form the ornament of the class of ware called by the French *laque burgautée* (from *burgau*, another name of the shell). This decoration was practised in the Ming period ; and to it, the Chinese gave the pretty and appropriate name of “misty brocade.” In late work, the iridescence is artificially produced by foil and colouring matter on the inner side of the thin *laminæ* of shell. Shell-dust was also used ; and, occasionally, *tesseræ* of shell cut in the style of the Japanese *kirikane*. Lacquer was also inlaid and encrusted with jade, turquoise, malachite, rose quartz, lapis lazuli and other hard stones, as well as with coral, soapstone, glazed porcelain, ivory, etc. In a few cases enamel was used.

Among the colours used, Dr. Bushell mentions gamboge, for colouring the finest transparent lacquer, *chao ch'i*, used as a medium for metallic gold ; “painter’s golden lacquer,” *hua chin ch'i*, of amber tone, chiefly used to mix with pallet colours and owing its tint to an addition of pig’s gall and vegetable oil ; the vermilion lacquer already mentioned, *chu ch'i*, made by grinding native cinnabar, *chu sha*, with pure lacquer ; and an inferior red produced by the substitution of colcothar. Black lacquer, *hei ch'i*, is prepared, in many grades, by adding iron sulphate or iron filings mixed with rice vinegar to lacquer and stirring in mild heat to remove the excess of water. Chestnut brown is a mixture of cinnabar and black lacquer ; buff is ochre ; a greenish yellow is obtained from orpiment, the yellow sulphide of arsenic, and a deeper and fuller green by mixing orpiment with indigo. Safflower, *Carthamus tinctorius*, supplies a carmine-

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red ; and soot or charcoal, animal or vegetable, an opaque black. The use of gold and silver has already been noted ; these are imitated with brass, bronze, copper or tin dust, foil or filings.

A curious statement is made by a French writer¹ of the 18th century, who says that the lustre of black Chinese lacquer can be restored by exposing it at night to frost ; or, better still, by burying it in snow for some time. One gives this for what it is worth ; but there would be little or no risk in making the experiment. The lacquer-ware that was shipwrecked on its way back to Japan from the Vienna Exhibition, was none the worse, when recovered, after immersion for eighteen months in sea water.

The so-called "Coromandel" lacquer—which is purely of Chinese origin—is much simpler in technique than any of the styles described above. A substantial basis of wood is overlaid with lacquer composition, on a priming of canvas, to a thickness of rather more than $\frac{1}{32}$ of an inch and the surface given a coating of polished lacquer, generally black but occasionally dark brown or red. On this the design is boldly carved in *intaglio* ; the portions hollowed out being then coloured or gilt. This work, which is of superb decorative effect in its best forms, only seems to occur in the flat ; and was one of the earliest kinds of Chinese lacquer to attract the attention (and incite the emulation) of Western nations. It was being imitated in this country before the end of the 17th century ; and Stalker in the *Art of Japanning* (1688) gives recipes for the counterfeit. It was used chiefly, if not entirely for screens ; but very many of these have been cut up for cabinets and other articles of furniture. The process, as in one of the examples described below, was sometimes used in conjunction with flat lacquer or lacquer in relief of the ordinary kinds.

Coromandel lacquer is said to have been made chiefly in the Province of Honan and thence to have been shipped, in Chinese boats, to the ports on the Coromandel coast. It consisted mainly of twelvefold screens, corresponding to the twelve months of the year and can hardly, so far as we can judge from known examples, be given an origin earlier than the last years of the Ming dynasty. To this period must belong a remarkable example reproduced by Monsieur E. A. Séguy² in which Europeans, in costume of about this period, are represented in hunting scenes, in which a caged animal—which suggests the Indian *cheetah*—is being used.

John Stalker, writing in 1688³ has a good deal to say about what he calls

¹ *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, Neufchâtel, 1765.

² Séguy, E. A., *Les Laques du Coromandel*, 1922.

³ *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, Oxford, 1688.

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“Bantam work”; and gives detailed instructions for the imitation of it. The point of interest to us, however, is that, at so early a date, he remarks that “since it is now almost obsolete, and out of fashion, out of use and neglected, we thought it a thankless trouble and charge to affix a Pattern, which could neither advantage Us, or oblige You: I think no person is fond of it, or gives it house-room, except some who have made new Cabinets out of old Skreens. And from that large old piece, by the help of a Joyner, make little ones, such as Stands or Tables, but never consider the situation of their figures; so that in these things so torn and hacked to joint a new fancie, you may observe the finest hodgpodg and medly of men and Trees turned topsie turvie. . . .” This reference suggests an earlier importation of this class of work than has generally been considered to be the case; but the eloquent Mr. Stalker’s comments must be accepted with some reserve. Screens of the kind were certainly being imported in considerable quantities by the East India Company at a later date, and continued to be a regular article of trade for some time. They were, as Stalker says, and as we know from the survivals, remorselessly cut up for all sorts of other furniture. The old name is no doubt derived from the fact that the town of Bantam was the principal market and centre of distribution for this work, the Chinese origin of which does not seem to have been known to the few early writers who mention it. Ephraim Chambers’s *Cyclopædia* (Supplement, 1753) for instance—defines Bantam work, as “a kind of Indian painting and carving on wood resembling Japan work only more gay”; and this is repeated in the 1788 edition. Bantam was the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company until about 1816. From 1603 to 1682 the English East India Company had a factory there, which exercised control over the Company’s establishments on the Coromandel Coast; and this connection may give a hint as to the origin of the latter term as applied to this work. But I have not been able definitely to trace the change of nomenclature. The French would naturally use the term Coromandel—as their chief port for Far Eastern trade was Pondicherry, on that coast; and it seems possible that, in the revival of interest in Chinese Art, we owe to that nation a name which has come to be adopted in this country.

Carved lacquer was chiefly made, during the period of its best quality, at Peking and Soochou—at the former place, under the patronage of the Ming and Ch’ing Emperors. No doubt, a good deal of earlier ware was produced at the old capital, Nanking; and in the Sung period at Chia-hsing Fu, about half-way between Hangchou and Soochou. Flat lacquer

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and lacquer in relief seems to have been especially associated with Canton ; and to this district belong, one may safely assume, the screens in which European figures form part of the decoration. Nineteenth-century Canton lacquer is thin and poor in quality and generally overloaded with ornament—a mere commercial product.

The modern style of Foo-chow lacquer was evolved by a craftsman named Shen Shao An, about three centuries ago ; and has been continued by his descendants to quite recent times, lacquer-ware by the last of the family, Shen Cheng Hao, having been exhibited in Europe within the last twenty years. It is remarkable for its fine surface, said to be due, in part at all events, to the use of silk instead of paper or canvas as a basis for the priming ; and also to the care with which properly matured and otherwise suitable wood was selected. A good effect is produced by the use of very fine gold or silver dust ; employed so as to give a sort of lustre to the lacquer which is very pleasing. In quite modern work a wide range of colours appears combined occasionally with bold carving, in the form of stands, brackets and the like.

One use of lacquer, although outside the scope of this volume, is too interesting to be passed without notice ; namely, that method of modelling called by the Japanese *Kanshitsu*. In the earliest form of this, a skeleton of wood was covered with a mixture of lacquer, clay, fibre or lint and modelled when still wet. Later, cloths saturated with fresh lacquer were draped on the wooden base, quickly stiffening into the required shape. In a later process still a clay core was used, on which lacquered cloths were moulded. When both lacquer and clay were dry, the latter was beaten out, leaving a tough shell, impervious to wet or the attacks of insects and providing a good surface for the application of gold or colours. These methods were practised during the 7th and 8th centuries and revived for a short time in the early years of the Yuan Dynasty ; and were responsible for the production of some of the best statuary of the period.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF LACQUER IN CHINA

According to native writers, the use of lacquer in China goes back to the legendary period of the history of the country. The *Hsui-shih-lu* has already been mentioned, of which only an ancient manuscript copy in the Imperial Library at Tōkyō (and that since destroyed in the disastrous fire following the recent great earthquake) was known by Mr. Imaizumi Yusaku to exist. This was written by Seitō Yōmei between A.D. 1621 and 1628; and is our authority for the account which follows—traditional, no doubt, to a considerable extent, but by no means to be disregarded for that reason.

In this it is stated that the earliest use of lacquer was for writing on bamboo slips—the most ancient form of book. The Emperor Shun, the fifth of the Five Rulers whose name is one of those—says Dr. Bushell—“placed by Confucius at the head of the *Shu Ching*, the classical annals compiled by him,” made use of utensils for food, of black lacquer. His successor, Yu, who cast the famous nine bronze tripods, carved with maps and figures, which, after 2000 years were lost in B.C. 333, is said to have had lacquered vessels made for ceremonial use, black outside and red within, and with pictorial designs. In his time, also, lacquer was allowed to be used in payment of taxes; a practice also found in the earliest (but much later) history of the industry, in Japan. During the Chou Dynasty (B.C. 1122–255) lacquer was used for the decoration of carriages and harness, under official regulations, and ornamented with patterns of animal-forms. Bows and arrows, also were adorned with it, as well as ceremonial utensils. At this time, gold and colours came into use as well as carved lacquer; and the material is stated to have been put to many other purposes and much valued for its hardness and the brilliance of its polish. The Emperor Ch'êng (B.C. 246–221) decorated his castle with lacquer. His successor was murdered by the eunuch Chao Kao, who lacquered his skull and used it as a drinking-cup (B.C. 207). At this period, lacquer was applied to armour, writing materials, utensils for banquets and musical instruments and for the decoration of palaces. During the Han Dynasty (B.C. 206–A.D. 25) the latter practice was further developed. It is recorded that the central gate of one of the Empresses was lacquered red and also that the material now began to be used for the paraphernalia of funerals. The writer here makes a note of the poisonous qualities of lacquer, which, if used without care, produces an eruption on the skin. The leaves, however,

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have a medicinal value. At this point we are able to make some slight contact with definite fact ; for a Japanese archæologist, Mr. Ryūzo Torii, in the course of excavations of the shell-mounds near Port Arthur, found, in 1910, remains of pot-covers of paper, lacquered red, which he definitely attributes to the Han Dynasty. The Ming author proceeds to remark that lacquer of the T'ang Dynasty must now be looked on as archaic. It was during Sung (A.D. 960-1127) that the art became well developed and modern methods practised. There had been no special class of lacquer-workers until the Han Dynasty—any artisan used the material ; but towards the end of that epoch such progress was made and the demand so increased that the industry became organised as a separate craft, and the names of a few individual artists were first recorded.

With regard to the foregoing, it should be noted that Mr. Imaizumi thinks that the reference to carved lacquer having been made under the Chou Emperors is merely a fanciful way of suggesting general progress ; and that the story of the lacquered skull only implies the old base uses of lacquer as compared with that later development of the art which, in his opinion, received its first stimulus from the Imperial patronage extended to it in such early times.

At this point, it is of value to remark that in Korea, an office charged with business relating to lacquer is recorded to have been in existence after the three old kingdoms had been united under Sinla (about A.D. 669) and references to the cultivation and use of lacquer occur from that time onwards. It was chiefly employed for domestic utensils ; and a frequent method of decoration at a later date was by means of inlaid shell, a process said to have been introduced from Japan in the 12th century. Recent explorations of graves which are being systematically conducted by the Japanese, have yielded evidence of a considerable skill in decoration of various kinds ; and among the objects found have been lacquered incense boxes, decorated with shell, and combs, authentically belonging to the Kōryō period (A.D. 918-1391).

Fortunately, the progress made in the art of lacquer by the 8th century of our era, can be measured far more completely, and without room for the shadow of a doubt, by other means than the uncertain accounts of Chinese *literati* or the wreckage of ancient monuments. Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the 6th century A.D., first from Korea. During the reign of the Empress Saiko-Tennō (A.D. 592-628), the Regent Shōtoku-Taishi, who adopted the new religion, devoted himself not only to its extension but to the promotion of close and friendly intercourse with China.

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The Hōryū-ji Temple, founded by him in A.D. 607, still exists ; and contains many objects of art either brought from China or Korea or made in Japan under the influence of Buddhist priests from those countries, by whom the foundations of Japanese Art were laid. Among them are specimens of Chinese lacquer of the greatest historical and artistic value.¹ Chinese influence, both in literature and in art, became, henceforth, predominant in Japan for a considerable period. The Emperor Shomu-Tennō (A.D. 724-749) adopted the mode of a Buddhist monk. Shortly after his death, his Empress, Kōmyō-kōgō, deposited in the Shōsō-in ("lonely building") of the Todaiji at Nara, all the treasures collected by the late Emperor, with many added by herself (A.D. 756) ; and this wonderful collection remains almost inviolate to the present day.

Among these treasures are a number that are certainly of Chinese origin ; and constitute, in fact, the only reliable evidence of the state of the lacquer industry at that early date. For instance, there are musical instruments in which the decoration is in the method called by the Japanese *heidatsu*, in which cut-out figures of gold or silver were laid on the surface, covered with many successive coats of lacquer and then rubbed down till the metal was again brought to light. This process has not been practised either in Japan or China for many centuries : but it produced a very effective decoration. One of the instruments—a *koto*—has the name of the Chinese maker of the T'ang period transliterated by the Japanese as "Shihei-i ka." Lacquer in this method was also applied to leather. Another process involved the use of gold or silver dust for patterns in lacquer-ware ; and, apart from these decorative groups, lacquer in simpler forms occurs in a large variety of objects, boxes of all sorts, sword-sheaths, covers of bottles, stands for Buddhistic images, mirror-backs, etc. There is no doubt that a considerable number of these things are actually Chinese in origin ; and that many others were, if made in Japan, done under direct Chinese influence. The authenticity of the collection is unimpeachable—and it stands out as a solitary but inviolable record of the arts of China, Korea and Japan in the 8th century.²

SUNG AND YUAN DYNASTIES

The *Ko ku yao lun*, already mentioned, gives the following account of the industry under the Sung (A.D. 960-1279) and Yuan (A.D. 1280-1367)

¹ *Japanese Temples and their Treasures*, Tōkyō, 1910.

² Omura Seigai, *Record of the Imperial Treasury, Shosoin*, Tōkyō, 1910, and Toyei Shuko, *Illustrated Catalogue of Ancient Imperial Treasury, called Shosoin*, Tōkyō, 1909.

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Dynasties. "During the Sung Dynasty the utensils intended for the imperial palace were generally made of gold and silver lacquer with plain uncarved surface.

"During the Yuan Dynasty a new manufactory was established at Chia-hsing Fu, in the province of Che-kiang, at Hsi-t'ang Yang-hui, which produced a large quantity of lacquer, carved for the most part deeply and in high relief. But the body is generally wanting in solidity, and the yellow ground, especially, easily chips and breaks off.

"Under the Yuan Dynasty at Hsi-t'ang Yang-hui in the prefecture of Chia-hsing, Chang Ch'êng and Yang Mao gained a great reputation for their carved works in red lacquer (*T'i Hung*), but in much of it the cinnabar coating is too thin and does not wear well. In the countries of Japan and Liuchiu, however, they are extremely fond of the productions of these two craftsmen.

"In the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty (A.D. 1280) an artist named P'êng Chün-pao, who lived at Hsi-t'ang, became celebrated for his paintings in gold on lacquer (*Ch'iang Chin*) and his landscape and figure scenes, pavilions and temples, flower sprays and trees, animals and birds, were all alike cleverly designed and finely finished.

"Cups and other specimens of pierced lacquer (*Tsuan Hsi*), in which the body is strong and solid, are generally old pieces dating from the Sung Dynasty, in which the gold decorations of figure scenes and picturesque views have been pierced through with a drill or metal borer, so as to complete the designs in open work.

"Lacquer-ware inlaid with mother-of-pearl is a special production of the province of Kiangsi, being made at Lu-ling Hsien, in the prefecture Chi-an Fu. The articles specially made here for the imperial palace during the Sung Dynasty, and the older productions generally, are all very strongly lacquered. Some of the best are strengthened by the inlay of a network of copper wire. Through the whole period of the Yuan Dynasty rich families were accustomed to have lacquer made for them here, which was solidly put on, and the figure decoration was perfectly designed and beautifully finished."

Dr. Bushell remarks that the foregoing notes prove that "all branches of lacquer work now carried on in China can be traced as far back at least as the Sung Dynasty, and that the chief centre of manufacture at that period was Chia-hsing Fu," an important city between Hangchou, the capital of the Southern Sung and Soochou, which also, later, was an important centre of the industry. It is unfortunate that, so far as we know, no

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authentic specimen of the lacquer-ware of this great period in Chinese Art has yet been authentically identified and described. Probably, there are examples among the still unexplored or imperfectly catalogued treasures of Japan ; and we are more likely to get reliable information on the subject from the keen art historians of that country than from China in its present state. In view of the certain knowledge we possess of the fine productions of Chinese artisans in other handicrafts, there is no reason why the descriptions of the progress of the lacquer industry, quoted above, should be disregarded or even discounted. We know, to some extent, what the Japanese lacquerers of the period were doing ; and it is at least reasonable to conclude that China, as in other arts, did not then lag behind.

Dr. Perceval Yetts has indicated¹ an interesting use of lacquer as a protective covering of Sung bronzes ; and some few domestic utensils found in excavations are, otherwise, all we have at present to go on, so far as concerns actual examples. The importance already attained by the industry towards the close of the period may, however, be estimated from the fact that in the *Chao yu kua* (translated by Dr. Hirth) it is stated that in A.D. 1220 lacquer-wares were exported from China to Bruni (Borneo), Cochin China, Java, Sumatra, Malabar, Zanzibar, Persia, Japan, Mecca, Ceylon, India, etc., the chief market being Ch'üan-chou-fu, in Fukien.

MING DYNASTY

The Chinese accounts of the lacquer industry during the Ming Dynasty have, at least, the virtue of having been written by contemporary historians ; and we are now able, in some degree, to turn to the study of actual specimens. The earliest description is the *Ko ku yao lun*, published during the reign of the first Ming Emperor ; from which the following notes are extracted :—

“ Among the cups and other articles of old carved lacquer fashioned after those of rhinoceros horn (*Ku Hsi P'i*), the best are reddish brown in colour, with smooth polished surface, like fine earthenware underneath ; the lacquer is lustrous, of strong substance and thin. The variety of a lighter red tint resembling the fruit of the cultivated Shantung jujube (*Zizyphus communis*) is known commonly as jujube lacquer. There are also some in which the carving is deeply cut and in strong relief, but these are classed lower.”

During Ming, imitations seem first to have been common ; and several references are made to them. For instance, in the account of carved red

¹ “ Chinese Art ” (*Burlington Magazine* monograph), 1925, Plate 13.

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lacquer, we have—" In the present time at Ta-li Fu, in the province of Yunnan, there are special factories of this lacquer, although much of their production is a spurious imitation. Many of the noble families of Nanking have real specimens in their houses. There is one kind in which the lacquer is entirely cinnabar red ; another kind in which black is used in combination with the red. Good specimens are very valuable, but there are many later imitations and great care is required to distinguish them." With regard to gold lacquer, it is noted that, " At Ning-kuo Fu, in the adjoining province of Kiangnan, the lacquerers of the present day decorate the lacquer with pictures pencilled in gold (*miao chin*) ; and in the two capitals (Nanking and Peking) also, the workshops turn out a great deal of lacquer decorated in the same syle." On the subject of inlay of mother-of-pearl, we again meet evidence of fraud and decadence. " The modern work of Lu-ling is plastered with lime and pig's blood mixed with vegetable oil (this would be the basis on which only a thin coat of lacquer would be overlaid) and is not strong but very easily damaged. Some use starch made from the rhizomes of the lotus, which is still weaker and wears off more quickly. The only good work of to-day is that made in private houses (i.e. by individual craftsmen and not in factories) which is fairly strong and lasting. Old houses in the several departments of Chi-an Fu often contain beds, chairs and screens, incrustated with mother-of-pearl figures of beautifully finished execution, which excite universal admiration. Among the things made here at the large houses are round boxes with covers for fruit, hanging plaques with inscriptions and chairs of Tartar fashion, which are hardly inferior to the old work, because, no doubt, they are of home manufacture."

Dr. Bushell also quotes¹ from the *Ch'ing pi ts'ang*, " Collection of Artistic Rarities " ; a little book in two parts on various works of art, by Chang Ying-wên, who wrote the last page on the day he died. It was published, with a preface by his son, Chang Ch'ien-te, in 1595. Incidentally it refers to a loan exhibition of works of art, in the province of Kiangsu, contributed from the collections of four of the principal families of the province, in 1530. The writer states that in " our own Ming Dynasty, the carved lacquer made in the reign of Yung Lo (A.D. 1403-1424) in the Kuo Yuan Ch'ang factory and that made in the reign of Hsüan Tê (A.D. 1426-1435) not only excelled in the cinnabar colouring and in the finished technique of the body, but also in the literary style of the inscriptions which were etched beneath the pieces. The inscription *Ta Ming Yung Lo nien chih* (made

¹ *Chinese Art*, p. 113.

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in the reign of Yung Lo of the Great Ming) was etched with a needle and filled in with black lac. The inscription *Ta Ming Hsüan Tê nien chih* ('made in the reign of Hsüan Tê of the Great Ming') was engraved with a knife and filled in with gold. The craftsmen in their skill with the knife rivalled their predecessors of the Sung and succeeded in establishing a new school of glyptic art. The lacquer-ware of thin body flecked with powdered gold, the lacquer work incrustated with mother-of-pearl, and the lacquer inlaid with plaques of beaten gold and silver, these three kinds are especially admired, even by the Japanese. The spurious imitations are of coarse heavy make and easy of detection." The statement that this work was admired "even by the Japanese" is a tribute to the high standard attained by the rival country.

The establishment of the Peking factory is also mentioned in the *Hsui-shih-lu*, which refers, moreover, to the engraving of date-seals. This work adds that the period was remarkable for a largely increased production and the introduction of many new methods; and that as many as thirty-six coats of lacquer were now used on a basis of wood or white metal. Red lacquer was much in vogue, the bases being generally lacquered black. We are able to reproduce an illustration of specimens of the carved lacquer produced in the reign of Hsüan-Tê (Plate 3). The chaos into which the Empire was thrown by the invasion of the Tartars, which resulted in the downfall of the Ming Line put an end, temporarily, to the further development of the lacquer industry as a fine art; and it was not until the new dynasty was firmly established that a revival took place, under their immediate patronage. This revival seems to have been confined mainly to a few methods only of lacquer-working, of which carved lacquer is the chief; and the fashion which seems to have prescribed these limits may have been responsible for the fact that Chinese artisans produced no developments of other methods of working similar to those which distinguish Japanese lacquer artists of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

It may not be without interest, here, to note the references made to the use of lacquer by Father Alvarez Semedo, a Portuguese who spent twenty-two years in the country during the first half of the 17th century.¹ In the course of his general survey he says, "They use much in their houses *Charam* an excellent vernish and painting of an accurate diligence"; and "In the vessels and utensiles of their house they are both very curious and expensive; using much the aforesaid *Charam*, a sort of vernish which is

¹ *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*. By F. Alvarez Semedo. Now put into English by a Person of quality, London, 1655.

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taken from certain trees, proper only to that, and the neighbouring Countries ; and in truth it is an excellent thing, as well from the perfection of the matter (as may be seen in the workes that come from thence) as for the easiness in working it, as well in making new things, as in retrimming the old, and reducing them to their former beauty." In his note on Canton, after enumerating various industries, he adds, " as also workes made with *Charam*, an excellent vernish, and with guilding, some whereof are transported into Europe." His early impression of the " easiness " of working lacquer seems soon to have been modified, for, later, he remarks, " Notwithstanding in the generall we do much exceed them in manufactures and mechanick Arts, except it be in that same *Charam*, which is indeed a singular Artifice." He relates that coffins, " Funerall Chests," are " made with all sorts of exquisite ornament on the outside, as of gold, *Charam* and other gallantries," and on the inside, " two weights, which they call *Manos* of Bitumen, and after that, one of *Charam*." The subjects for the examinations for degrees are " written in large letters on white tables (tablets) of *Charam*." At banquets where tables are provided only for from one to four persons according to their degree, the tables " have all *Frontalls*, or a peice of linen hanging downe from the edges, but neither Table-cloath nor Napkins, using only their *Charam*, a neate and polished varnish, with which their Tables are covered." The export of lacquer from Canton, to India and Persia had already been recorded by the Arab traveller Ibn Batuta, who was at that place in 1345 and sets forth his admiration of lacquer.¹

Few names have been preserved of Chinese artists in lacquer ; and, with the exception of a carved lacquer tray in the Korinin Temple of Daitokuji at Kyōto, which is said to bear the signature of Chang Cheng (*Japanese* Chosei), an artist of the Yuan Dynasty, there appears to be nothing that can be directly identified as the work of any of them. It is reproduced in *Japanese Temples and their Treasures*. Other names are mentioned in Japanese records, transliterated in that language as follows : Yomo and Shumin (Yuan) and Choyan, Senchin, Roho, Kinho, Oycan, Oken and Tutsui (Ming). These occur in the *Kundai Kwansayu-choki*, a catalogue of the time of Yoshimasa (1435-1490) which gives an account of the importation of various forms of Chinese lacquer-ware especially valued in connection with the Tea Ceremony.² These included various forms of carved lacquer, engraved, painted (*zonsei*) and that method known as *guri*.

¹ Ibn Batoutah, *Voyages* (trans. Deffrémery).

² Breuer, A. H., *The Influence of China on Lacquer in Japan* (Japan Society), 1914.

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According to F. Hirth, lacquer in relief (Japanese *takamakiye* or *hiramakiye*) was first seen in China in the case of presents brought by an embassy from Japan to the Emperor Hsüan-tê (1426-1436) which excited so great admiration that after vain attempts had been made to imitate it, Chinese lacquerers were sent to Japan to learn the method. This is mentioned in Japanese books on the subject and confirmed (according to Dr. Breuer) by a note in a Chinese list of painters which relates that the artist Yang Hsüan was able "to depict, in gold and coloured lacquer, scenes from life, flowers and birds in such perfect manner as to make them appear equal to paintings on silk." One must admit that this comment hardly seems to be as conclusive as Dr. Breuer suggested. It is difficult to imagine that successful work in relief would be alluded to in such terms, however justifiable they might be in the case of flat lacquer.

THE GREAT CH'ING DYNASTY

(A.D. 1644 to end of the Empire)

The second Ch'ing Emperor, K'ang Hsi (A.D. 1662-1723) established, in 1680, within the precincts of the palace at Peking, upwards of twenty-seven workshops for the cultivation of various artistic handicrafts, in connection with the Kung Pu, or Board of Works. Among these was one devoted to lacquer; and artisans were brought from various parts of the Empire for the purpose. To this wise act, the revival of the art of carved lacquer is undoubtedly due; but Canton, Tongking, Soochou and Foo-chou were also important localities of the industry. The Jesuit Father, Louis le Compte,¹ who arrived in China in 1687 and spent several years there, gives a fair general account of lacquer-ware. "Vernish, which is so common in China, is disperst all over; it takes all Colours, they mix Flowers of Gold and Silver with it, they paint Men, Mountains, Palaces, Huntings, Birds, Combats and several Figures, that make a bas-relief in the work, and renders it extremely pleasing and delightful, so that in this point the Chineses are Magnificent for small Charges." He remarks that "for Tables and ordinary chairs, it is sufficient to lay on 2 or 3 layers of Vernish which makes it so transparent, that one may discern every Vein of the wood through it. Now if you would hide all the matter . . . you must do it over and over again, till at length it be nothing but Ice; but so fine at first, that it may serve for a Mirror." He mentions the use of gold,

¹ *Memoirs and Observations made in a late Journey through the Empire of China*, Eng. trans., London, 1697.

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silver and colours in decoration ; and gives a recipe for lacquer composition—" Paper, packthread, lime and some other Substance well beaten with which the Vernish incorporateth " (a similar mixture is elsewhere stated to consist of paper, fibre of *urtica nivea*, and egg-shell, beaten up with camellia oil and lacquer). Le Comte specifies cabinets, tables and " Vernisht Skreens " ; and particularly that " There are very pretty and curious Cabinets at Tonkin ; but what is brought to us from Japan, as to that matter, are in no way inferiour to the China work." He also has a curious suggestion as to the possibility that lacquer is used in making (what seems to be from his description) the crackle on celadon porcelain (p. 154). Incidentally one may note that the frontispiece of this very interesting treatise is a portrait of K'ang Hsi, engraved on copper by M. Vander Gucht—" aged 41 years, Drawn when he was but 32 " !

K'ang Hsi extended his favour to the Jesuit Fathers then in China in considerable numbers, and the European influence thus introduced into the country is reflected in the arts of the time. So far as concerns lacquer this is seen especially in the screens decorated with European figures, and notably in that made as a gift to the Emperor Leopold I, with the double-eagle in the cresting (Plate 35). This was also the period of the first great importation into Europe of Chinese lacquered furniture and, as a result, of the establishment in Western countries of the imitation lacquer industry and the development generally of the " Chinoiserie " fashion. His reign corresponds with the best period of Japanese lacquer under the Tokugawa régime.

Ch'ien Lung (A.D. 1736-1796) was a great admirer of carved red lacquer ; and, under his auspices, the Imperial factory made large quantities of furniture of every kind for his palaces, ranging from great twelvefold screens, thrones and chairs of state to small objects for toilet and other uses. He also had a number of panels, in this material, made to commemorate his victories and other notable events, and often added poems written by or for him to the decoration thereof. An interesting account of the industry, in his reign, at Canton, appears in D'Incarville's "*Mémoire sur la Vernis de la Chine*," published in the *Mémoires . . . présentés à l'Académie Royale des Sciences*, Paris, 1760 ; who, however, remarks on the inferiority of the Canton lacquer of his day to that of Japan. Under Ch'ien Lung carved red lacquer, nevertheless, attained its highest pitch of technical excellence, although the breadth of design and imaginative qualities of the earlier work now give way to a more stereotyped formalism.

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After his death the art of lacquer, in common with other Chinese artistic handicrafts, rapidly decayed. The Imperial factories, says Dr. Bushell, "were closed one by one, and what remained of the buildings was burned down in 1869." Carved red lacquer has continued to be produced during the 19th century ; but it is sadly inferior to the old work. Examples of it, at its best, can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, in the form of loans from His Majesty the King, of examples presented at one time or another by the late rulers of China to those of this country.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECTS OF DECORATION

It is not too much to say that there is no Chinese ornament without a meaning ; and in a number of cases, traditional patterns can be traced back to the very beginning of the arts of the Middle Kingdom. To enter into a full examination of this intricate subject is not within the scope of this book ; but an indication, so far as possible, of the meaning of the principal devices found in various forms of lacquer-ware—as, indeed, in other Chinese art-productions—should add to the interest of students of the subject. Dr. Perceval Yetts states the position concisely in these words : “ From the earliest times the Chinese artist has exerted his skill with the intention of producing not merely objects pleasing to the eye, but at the same time emblems conveying a definite meaning.”¹ Without at least an effort to grasp this fact, no approach can be made toward understanding the art of the Far East, even in its humblest branches.

In lacquer-ware one does not find so great a diversity of subject as in porcelain—a fact to be accounted for by the difficulty of the material. But the principal categories of symbols are freely used, while of animals supernatural and natural, the dragon, phoenix, bat and crane are most often in evidence. Clouds, the full moon, mountains, rocks and trees lend themselves well to effective treatment in lacquer of every variety, and are of frequent occurrence ; while the Chinese love of Nature is seen to advantage in a beautiful and most skilful arrangement of the favourite flowers—whether as the chief or the subordinate elements in a decorative composition. Buddhist and Taoist emblems are often employed indiscriminately ; even when representations occur of the chief personages of one or other of those cults. Of the latter, Shou Lao, a deification of Lao Tze, the founder of the Taoist philosophy, is more often found with sceptre (*ju*) and stag or crane ; but the Eight Taoist Immortals, the Sages of the Bamboo Grove and those of the Wine Cup are also to be seen. Children at their games supply a pleasing theme, by way of variety ; and the pavilioned gardens offer a nice contrast to the wild and rugged landscapes in which some of the personages are placed. The following are the most important of the subjects used purely as ornaments.

The EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS of HAPPY AUGURY (*Pa chi-hsiang*) are taken mainly from the numerous objects supposed to have figured on the sole of Buddha's Foot (Yetts). They are as follows : the Wheel of the Law (*Lun*), in flames, heralding the coming of a Chakravarti or Universal

¹ *Symbolism in Chinese Art* (China Society publication), 1912.

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Monarch ; the Conch-shell (*Lo*) used at religious ceremonies, an attribute of royalty ; the State Umbrella (*San*), a symbol of high rank ; the Canopy (*Kai*) also symbolic of royalty ; the Sacred Lotus (*Hua*) ; the Vase of relics (*P'ing*) ; the Pair of Fish (*Yu*), emblems of marriage and fertility ; and the Endless Knot, or Entrails (*Chang*), an emblem of longevity which Dr. Yetts suggests is derived from the mystic sign of Vishnu.

The EIGHT TRIGRAMS (*Pa kua*) begin with three unbroken lines representing heaven and end with three broken lines representing earth : the intermediate diagrams being combinations of the broken and unbroken lines representing vapour, fire, thunder, wind, water and mountains. They are often shown in conjunction with the sign of the Creative Principle *yin* (negative) and *yang* (positive)—a circle divided by a spiral line, the former black with a white dot, signifying darkness, earth, femininity, etc. ; and the latter, white with a black dot, denoting light, heaven, masculinity, etc.

The EIGHT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (*Pa Yin*).

Ch'ing. Sounding Stone, in form of a mason's square and suspended to be struck with a hammer. A homonym of *Ch'ing* " Good Fortune."

Chung. A metal bell also to be struck with a mallet.

Ch'in. Lute.

Ti. Bamboo flute.

Chu. Box of wood with metal hammer.

Ku. Drum covered with skin.

Shêng. Reed organ, a mouth instrument with seventeen reed pipes of varying length and gourd wind-chamber.

Hsüan. Icarina. Cone-shaped instrument of clay pierced with six holes.

The TWELVE ORNAMENTS of Robes (*Shih-êrh Chang*).

1. *Jih*. The Sun, with a three-legged cock.
2. *Yueh*. The Moon, with the hare, under a cassia-tree, pounding the Elixir of Life.
3. *Hsing Chên*. The Stars, a triangle of three circles, the upper sides joined with lines.
4. *Shan*. Mountains.
5. *Lung*. A pair of five-clawed dragons.
6. *Hua Chung*. The " variegated " animal—a pheasant—the " flowery fowl."

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7. *Tsung Yi*. Temple vessels—a pair of cups, one with a tiger and the other with a monkey—noted for filial piety.
8. *Ts'ao*. Aquatic grass.
9. *Huo*. Fire.
10. *Fên Mi*. Grains of Rice.
11. *Fu*. An axe.
12. *Fu*. The “symbol of distinction,” two simple frets, back to back : known later as the brocade pattern.

The EIGHT TAOIST IMMORTALS and their attributes (*pa-hsien*).

Chung Li-chüan, carrying a fan with which he revives the souls of the dead, or a branch of peach-tree. He rides upon an ox.

Lü Tung-pin, with magic sword.

Li Tieh-kuai, a beggar with magic pilgrim's iron crutch and gourd.

Ts'ao-Kuo-chiu, in official robes with hat and bamboo castanets.

Lan Ts'ai-ho carrying a spade and flower basket (perhaps a woman).

Chang Kuo, seated backwards on a mule with bamboo tube and two rods.

Han Hsiang-tzu, a young man with flute.

Ho Hsien-ku, a maid, in leaf robe with lotus-flower.

The latter group are all illustrated on a brocade in the Victoria and Albert Museum and fully described by Dr. Bushell in the text of his monumental work on the Walters' Collection of Oriental Ceramic Art (p. 579).

The EIGHT PRECIOUS THINGS (*pa pao*) of the Taoists.

The Jewel (*Chu*), Cash (*ch'ien*), Lozenge (*fang-shêng*) symbolical of victory, Pair of Books (*shu*), Painting (*hua*), Musical Stone (*ch'ing*), Pair of Rhinoceros-horn Cups (*chùch*) and Artemisia Leaf (*ai-yeh*).

The FOUR LIBERAL ARTS, of Writing, Painting, Music and Chess, are represented by their apparatus, such as a group of books, brushes or paintings, a musical instrument, generally the lute, and a board for chess or *wei chi*, the Chinese equivalent of the Japanese game *gō*.

Among other favourite devices are all or some of the varied collection of vases, bronze utensils, etc., known as the “Hundred Antiques” (*Po ku*), a fine example of which is to be found in the border of one of the great “Coromandel” screens at South Kensington (No. 130-1885), of which four panels are reproduced herein (Plate 53).

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ANIMALS

The FOUR SUPERNATURAL ANIMALS (*ssu ling*) of the Chinese are :—

The DRAGON (*Lung*) is represented generally with bearded, frowning head, straight horns, a scaly serpentine body, four legs, the feet armed with strong claws, bristling dorsal spines and emitting flames and smoke. The claws were originally three on each foot ; but afterwards the number was increased to four and five ; the use of the latter being strictly reserved for Imperial use under the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties. A number of varieties of dragon are described by Dr. Bushell¹. The Buddhist dragon of the law is represented as grasping the jewel of the faith in one of its outstretched paws. Celestial dragons chase the mystic jewels which grant every wish. The sea-dragon appears coiled in the depths of the sea. The dragon is (says Dr. Bushell) peculiarly symbolical of all that pertains to the Son of Heaven, the Emperor's throne being styled the dragon-seat, and his face as the dragon-countenance ; his banner is the dragon-flag, and after his death he is borne aloft by dragons to the regions of the blessed.

The PHŒNIX (*Fêng-huang*)—*feng* being the name of the male and *huang* that of the female ; the compound being the generic name of the bird, which, Dr. Bushell notes, has many analogies with the phœnix of the Greeks. It is immortal, dwells in the highest regions of the air, and only appears as an omen of the advent of virtuous rulers or an emblem of an auspicious reign. It once ranked even above the dragon, but later became the special emblem of the empress. In the reign of Ch'ien Lung, the banners borne before the Empress's chariot of ceremony displayed both the dragon and the phœnix. It is usually represented with the beak of a swallow, the head of a pheasant, long neck, gorgeous plumage and a flowing tail adorned with long separate plumes from three to seven in number. The inseparable *fêng-huang* symbolises conjugal love. It is generally seen flying in the midst of clouds and lightning or associated with the blossoming tree-peony. Plate 2 affords an especially fine example of the use of the combined dragon and phœnix in ornament.

The TORTOISE (*Kuei*) lives for five thousand years and after a certain age “ bears the sign of its patriarchal dignity in the shape of a hairy tail.” “ A tortoise collaborated with the dragon-horse in revealing the Eight Trigrams to Fu Hsi ; and the shells of the tortoise were anciently employed as one of the chief elements in the art of divination ” (Yetts). The tortoise is used as an emblem of strength and also of longevity. In Hindu mythology it

¹ *Oriental Ceramic Art* (Walters' Collection), 1896, text, p. 592.

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supports the elephant which upholds the universe. In China it carries on its back P'êng Lai Shan, the island dwelling of the immortals.

The UNICORN (*Ch'i-lin*) is again an example of the combination of the male (*ch'i*) and female (*lin*) of the mythical species. It has the body of a deer, with slender legs, divided hoofs, the head of a dragon, tail of a lion and its shoulders adorned with flames. It only appears as a good omen ; and is said to live for a thousand years, to be the noblest of all animals and the emblem of perfect good—to tread so lightly as to leave no footprints and so carefully as to harm no living creature.

With the foregoing group the tiger (*hu*) is often associated, making a group of the “ Five *Ling* ”—It signifies military prowess.

To De Quincey, in the agony of his dreams, a Chinaman seemed “ an antediluvian man renewed.” That nightmare does not oppress a sane and well-balanced European intellect, but there is something in the hint. For it is surely not too far-fetched to see in these ancient forms a tradition which may have been derived from the monstrous reptiles and other beasts of prehistoric times ; and recent geological research in China would appear to lend some colour to the speculation.

The supernatural animals have a further significance of importance. One presides over each of the Four Quadrants of the vault of Heaven, the Azure Dragon ruling the East, the Vermilion Bird (phoenix) the South, the White Tiger the West and the Black Warrior, the Tortoise, the North. In harmony with the daily movement of the sun, they also represent the Four Seasons, beginning with Spring (the Dragon). Some moral idea of this sort underlies the advice of the Ming writer on lacquer, that decoration should conform to the principles of Nature. Plate 53 supplies a fine illustration of a dragon-headed horse careering over the waves of an ancient sea.

The quadrant is further divided into a Zodiac of Twelve Animals—the Twelve Earthy Branches, viz. :—the dragon, hare, tiger, fox, rat, boar, cock, monkey, goat, horse and snake ; and again into twenty-eight each with an animal associated with one of the ancient constellations. Dr. Yetts reproduces¹ a mirror of the Tang period, in which the whole system is very legibly set out, in combination with the Eight Trigrams.

The STAG (*lu*) is an emblem of long life. At the age of 1000 years it becomes blue, and black at 2000 years.

The LION (*shih-tzu*) is the defender of the law and protector of Buddhist sacred buildings. The male is represented with a ball in its paw ; the female with a puppy. This beast is of Indo-Buddhistic origin.

¹ *Symbolism in Chinese Art*, Fig. XIII.

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The ELEPHANT, the HORSE and the HARE are the only animals that have obtained admission to Nirvana on their own merit and are sometimes shown as crossing the dark sea that leads thereto. The elephant bears on his back the sacred jewels, as in the centre compartment of the Throne of Ch'ien Lung (Frontispiece). The horse may carry sacred books ; and the hare is shown living in the moon, in which a dwelling of honour was provided for it as a reward for the proffered sacrifice of its body to feed the starving Buddha. There it sits compounding the Elixir of Life with a pestle and mortar ; sometimes in company with the toad into which Ch'ang-ngo was changed after she had stolen the precious drug from her husband.

The CRANE (*hsien hao*) or STORK is emblematic of long life and occurs frequently in this sense. The BAT (*pien-fu*) is still more common in lacquerware especially. It signifies happiness, the character *fu* (bat) being a homonym of *fu* (happiness). Five bats surrounding the character *Shou* (Long Life) would be read as the Five Blessings, Happiness, Wealth, Peace, Virtue and Longevity. The BUTTERFLY (*hu t'ieh*) stands for length of days ; and the FISH (*yü*) for abundance, by a similar process.

Such representative symbols as the above—with others—are frequently found in combinations of which one or two examples have already been given. Dr. Bushell¹ and Dr. Yetts² supply a number of examples of this kind of rebus. Thus, a bat, peach and two "cash" united by a fillet, reads "Happiness and Longevity both complete" ; and the process can be applied to almost every combination of symbolic ornament that is likely to be found.

TREES AND FLOWERS

PEACH (*t'ao*). Among the trees, the peach, in Taoist symbolism, occupies the first place. The peach-tree of the genii, whose fruit confers immortality, grows on the borders of the Lake of Gems in the domain of the goddess Si Wang Mu, who is represented in both Chinese and Japanese Art, with the mystic fruit. The peach-tree is also a symbol of happy marriage, following a well-known Ode by the Emperor Shih Huang Ti (B.C. 246-209).

PINE (*sung*), BAMBOO (*chu*), PRUNUS (plum, *mei*). These three are generally grouped as symbols of long life ; the Pine and Bamboo because they are evergreen and flourish even in winter, and the Prunus because, in extreme old age, it still throws out flowering twigs.

¹ *Oriental Ceramic Art.*

² *Symbolism in Chinese Art.*

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FUNGUS (*ling chih*). The sacred branching fungus (*Polyporus lucidus*) signifies long life ; but was formerly one of the emblems of Good Luck.

CORAL is also symbolical of long life.

TREE PEONY (*mutan-hua*). Spring—symbol of wealth.

LOTUS (*hê-hua*). Summer—the sacred flower of Buddhism—the emblem of purity—the rain-drops sparkling on its leaves signify enlightenment.

CHRYSANTHEMUM (*chü-hua*). Autumn—symbolical of long duration.

PRUNUS or Wild Plum (*mei-hua*). Winter—the symbol of beauty. This is the flower commonly but erroneously termed the hawthorn.

The above constitute the Flowers of the Four Seasons (*ssu chi hua*).

The flowers of the Twelve Months as given in a screen of "Coromandel" lacquer in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 163-1889) are as follows:—

FLOWERS OF THE TWELVE MONTHS.

January. Prunus : Mei hua.

February. Peach : T'ao hua.

March. Tree Peony : Mu tan.

April. Cherry : Ying t'oa.

May. Magnolia : Yü lan.

June. Pomegranate : Shih liu.

July. Lotus : Lien hua.

August. Pear : Hai t'ang.

September. Mallow : Ch'in k'uei.

October. Chrysanthemum : Chü hua.

November. Gardenia : Chih hua.

December. Poppy : Ying su.

These vary in different provinces, but the above may be taken as a standard series.

GRAPE-VINE (*pu-t'ao*) was introduced into China by Chang Ch'ien who was sent on a mission to the Indo-Scyths on the Oxus river in B.C. 139, by one of the Han Emperors. He reached his destination and finally returned to China after being twice captured, bringing much information both about trade and Buddhism. The Chinese name given above is derived from the Greek *βοτρυς* ; and the vine with squirrels, as in Plate 14, is frequently found on ancient Chinese mirrors treated in a style directly suggestive of Greek ornament.

Of the above, in addition to those of which the significance has already

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been mentioned, the peach is also emblematic of spring and is of the first importance as being the fruit of the Tree of Life of the Taoist Paradise, which ripens only once in 3000 years and confers immortality on mortals. The CHERRY or Cherry Apple blossom in combination with the magnolia and tree peony forms the rebus (may you dwell in) jade halls (and enjoy) wealth and honours (Yetts); and the POMEGRANATE expresses fertility—a numerous family. The NARCISSUS (*shui-hsien-hua*) is sometimes emblematic of winter, and is a good omen if in bloom at the New Year. Next in rank to the peach, the Taoists place the SACRED FUNGUS (*ling chih*) and the grouped Pine (*sung*), Bamboo (*Chu*) and Prunus (*mei*) all emblematic of long life; the fungus on account of its durability, the evergreen, pine and bamboo, and the prunus because it blossoms from leafless branches even in extreme old age. The latter group is also significant of long-enduring friendship. Another series of flowers of the Four Seasons includes the orchid, gardenia, pomegranate and prunus. Another group is composed of the peach, pomegranate and Buddha-finger CITRON—the Three Fruits (*san kuo*) symbolical of the Three Abundances (*san to*)—Abundance of Years, of Sons, and of Happiness.

PATTERNS

Of the characteristic patterns most frequently found on lacquer-ware, two call for special mention. The fret known as the MEANDER or key-pattern is seen in various forms, and is generally used as borders. It is of great antiquity and is derived from archaic pictographs representing clouds and thunder—hence the Chinese name “cloud and thunder pattern,” or, simply “thunder pattern.” Dr. Yetts quotes a Chinese writer’s interpretation of the symbolism of this pattern used as a diaper on a bronze cauldron of the Chou period—“the lozenge-shaped spaces are occupied by the ‘cloud and thunder’ pattern surrounding a small nipple in the centre. For the nipple nourishes mankind, while clouds and thunder fertilise growing things. The *k’uei* dragon, moreover, exerts a restraining influence against the sin of greed. Here we have but a single vessel, yet all the eternal principles are there complete! How excellent was the philosophy of the ancients!” One could hardly select a better example of the light in which ornament appears to the Chinese philosopher.

The other symbol, very often used as a diaper, particularly on carved lacquer, is the SVASTIKA, significant of infinity—thus in conjunction with the character *shou* it would be read as “a myriad ages.” The svastika has, of

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course, a distribution in the history of ornament extending far beyond its use in China.

The character *shou* (longevity) frequently appears as an ornament of good omen, often in circular form as in Plate 11. *Ch'un* (spring) is used in the same manner, good examples appearing in the "Circular Box for a Ceremonial Gift" (Plate 29) and in the incised "Plaque" (Plate 47); both these are further adorned with a representation of Shou Lao in the centre of the character. The inscription *Ta Chi* (great good luck) also occurs occasionally on lacquer-ware as a decorative feature.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Plates I and 2.—IMPERIAL TABLE FOR A MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The art of the lacquerer seems to have found its highest expression in the sumptuous furniture made for Imperial use ; and of work of this quality we are able to illustrate several typical examples. The earliest in date is a table of unusual shape and magnificence of ornament. The whole of its surface is decorated with deep vermilion lacquer, cut through on its upper surface to the depth of rather more than one-eighth of an inch so as to expose the buff ground and form a relief for the pattern—a quite exceptional depth. The ornament on the sides and legs is less deep, but still sufficiently so to be effective. It is interesting to note also, how it is arranged to protect itself against ordinary wear and tear. Apart from the cracks caused by the shrinkage of age, the lacquer is generally in good condition. Some few damages have been sustained, as was inevitable in a life of perhaps more than three centuries—but these cannot be regarded as detracting from the splendour of this fine piece of furniture as it exists to-day.

The upper surface is decorated with a twelve-lobed compartment within a border corresponding to the shape of the table. The central feature consists of a superbly designed Imperial Dragon, ascendant, on the right of a sacred Lotus of characteristic Buddhistic form, and balanced on the left by a magnificent seven-tailed phœnix swooping downwards. The whole of the remaining space within the compartment is filled with lotus flowers in bud, full bloom, and with seed and foliage, distributed with extreme skill and ingenuity. Each of the outer angles within the border contains a six-tailed phœnix of simpler form, arranged with a filling of flowers and foliage, among which one recognises the chrysanthemum, rose, peony and magnolia. The border has, alternately, four-toed dragons and five-tailed phœnixes, all facing to the left, and on a rich ground of lotus flowers and foliage. The table has three drawers, each running through its entire breadth. The front panels of the drawers again have each a four-toed dragon and a five-tailed phœnix and lotus plants. Below the drawers is a panelled support with four panels (two large and two small) on the long side, and three panels of equal size on the other, with floral decoration ; while the lower frame has a reversing strap-work ornament with alternating flowers. The top of the table and the lower frame are

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supported with open-work brackets also richly carved with similar designs.

The legs are rather remarkable. They rake slightly outwards, not only giving an appearance of stability, but, in fact, securing it. In section, the outer half is rounded, while the inner has straight sides meeting at an angle—the section of the whole being kite-shaped. They are decorated with panels of flowers protected with plain perpendicular ribs to take the wear.

The significance of the chief motive of decoration cannot be overlooked. The five-toed Dragon (*lung*) as here represented is the peculiar symbol of the Emperor as is the phoenix (*feng-huang*) of the Empress. This implies, without any room for doubt, that the table was made for their personal use, and the fact that these emblems, with the lotus (signifying purity and perfection), constitute almost the whole of the ornament, is definite evidence that it was a piece of quite exceptional importance in the furniture of the Palace. The design of the combined Imperial Dragon and phoenix suggests that the table was made for use in connection with an Imperial marriage ceremony. A similar design is found on a piece of embroidered satin in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The attribution of it to the Ming period must be taken as the expression of a personal opinion based on comparison with other accepted examples, and particularly in regard to the quality of the lacquer and treatment of the design. I am inclined to place it in the Wan Li period (A.D. 1573–1619).

Height, 2 feet $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; table top, 2 feet $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 3 feet 11 inches.

Ming Dynasty (Wan Li)

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 3.—TABLE SCREEN IN CARVED RED LACQUER

Decorated with a pavilion of three apartments, in the central one of which is an old man, seated ; and in each of those at the sides, an attendant preparing for a meal. Two visitors with attendants are approaching. The pavilion is in a garden on a terrace, with flowers in vases and various plants, pine and other trees, flying cranes, etc. Below is a band of lotus flowers and scrolls. The screen is mounted in a finely carved stand of hard wood with bats, *feng*-headed scrolls and the character *shou*. On either side are small enamel plaques. On the back of the screen is a realistically carved spray of chrysanthemums in high relief.

Height, 23 inches ; width, 16 inches.

Ming Dynasty (Hsüan Te, dated)

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

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Plate 4.—BOX IN TWO TIERS, WITH TRAY

The cover is decorated with a scene representing a guest, followed by his attendant bearing an umbrella, being conducted by an old man to the entrance of a two-storey pavilion on a terrace overhung with trees on a rocky eminence. On the terrace, he is awaited by two ladies, one with a fan ; a third is seated in a swing. In the upper storey of the pavilion are three female musicians. On the sides are a river with boats of various kinds and islands on which are other buildings ; on one bank, a bridge with two arches, and on the other, a battlemented wall with bastion.

Carved in red lacquer of deep, rich colour and with great skill. The tray, interior and base, are lacquered black.

Height, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; width, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; depth, 6 inches.

Ming Dynasty (*probably Wan Li*)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 5.—SALVER

A salver of unusual size, circular, with fluted border and gilt metal rim. In the centre is an elaborate conventional peach-blossom, with foliage, surrounded with eight bats and eight sprays of various flowers, in relief on a diapered ground. Around this is a border of triangular arabesque ornaments from which springs the fluted rim, each compartment filled with a spray of chrysanthemum. In carved red lacquer, the base lacquered black. This salver affords one of several instances where lacquer-ware may well be compared with cloisonné enamel, for general treatment. For instance, the Ming "Palace Salver," No. 4785-1858 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is similar in form to the example now illustrated.

Height, 3 inches ; diameter, 16 inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 6.—CIRCULAR BOWL AND COVER

A bowl of unusual character decorated with four bands of foliage and flowers, the upper of which (on the cover) has also the Eight Emblems of Happy Augury (*pa chi-hsiang*). In the centre of the latter and forming the top of the cover is a scene representing Shou Lao, holding a sceptre terminating in a sacred jewel, seated under a spreading tree and with four attendant disciples seated on either side. In front of him is a dancing stork, his familiar bird. The decoration is carried out in carved brown lacquer, generally on a plain buff lacquer ground. The diaper forming the groundwork of the central design is in a rich reddish-brown lacquer,

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and this composition is enclosed within a circle of gold lacquer. The interior and base are lacquered brown. The mingling of the Taoist subject with Buddhist emblems is an example of the open mind with which these symbols of different schools of philosophy were regarded by the Chinese ; and the colour scheme is rare and effective.

Height, 8 inches ; diameter, 10 inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 7.—AN OCTAGONAL COVERED BOWL, ON FOOT

The centre panel forming the top of the cover has a Chinese personage, probably Shou Lao, seated in a cave, with his stag and an attendant. The upper part of the cover is divided into eight compartments, each with children playing various games. Below are two narrow borders of tree-peony blossoms, forming the upper and lower rims of the bowl and cover ; and beneath are eight sprays of flowers and foliage on a diaper ground. The foot has a chrysanthemum flower and leaves in each compartment. The design is in boldly carved red lacquer with softened outlines and of a fine deep colour, the lower part on a ground of yellowish-buff. The interior and base are lacquered black.

Height, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (Wan Li)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 7.—BOX FOR INCENSE

This box is carved out of a mass of solid brown lacquer, without sub-structure of wood or other material. The subject of the somewhat primitive decoration appears to be two priests, face to face, between them being a (☿) peach. This is on a boldly cut diaper which also appears, in panels, on the sides. Boxes of this class are illustrated in Dr. Breuer's paper, read before the Japan Society (Vol. XII). The date must be uncertain, but we are inclined to place it not later than the beginning of the 16th century.

Height, $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches ; $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches, square.

Ming Dynasty (☿ Chêng Tê)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 8.—BOX FOR AN IMPERIAL GIFT

The decoration of this important example of Ming work is carved in black on a ground of red diapers of three patterns, the svastika and two varieties of florets. The design of the cover is in three compartments, the centre

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of which, in the opinion of Dr. Bushell, represents a visit of an Emperor to a two-storied pavilion, on the veranda of which two officials wait to receive him. The Emperor is in a chariot drawn by two horses, and attended by fan-bearers and other retinue. He is preceded by state umbrella-bearers—who are accompanied by a deer—men bearing ducks in dishes, halberdiers, etc. Above, is an aged pine-tree, the full moon and clouds, among which a phoenix hovers. The upper panel shows a sage seated at the entrance to a house, receiving a scholar with two attendants bearing bundles of rolled pictures; the lower has an official shooting at a screen with a bow, the arrow having transfixed the eye of a stork in the design. His efforts are watched by two other men of his rank; and, from within a pavilion, by two women. Dr. Bushell considers these panels to be symbolical, respectively, of the arts of Peace and War. The sides have a repeating pattern of peony flowers and birds of paradise. The interior is, unusually, lacquered red; and the box bound with silver mounts.

Height, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; length, 25 inches; width, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (Wan Li)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 8.—TRAY

A shallow tray with boldly carved design of tree-peony growing from rocks, and a butterfly, on a ground of horizontal lines, broken at intervals; within a border of aster-blossoms and leaves. In red lacquer of deep, rich colour, the base black.

Height, 1 inch; length, $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plates 9, 10.—A SET OF ALTAR FURNITURE (*wu kung*)

This rare set of Altar Furniture, the only complete series in carved lacquer which has yet been noted, was obtained in Peking by the late Rt. Hon. Sir Claude M. Macdonald, P.C., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., and was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Lady Macdonald as a memorial to that distinguished diplomatist. It consists of an Incense Burner, a pair of Flower Vases and a pair of Pricket Candlesticks. The Incense Burner (*hsiang-lu*) is rectangular in section with two projecting swan-neck handles; its body rests on four columns decorated with cloud pattern and with lion-mask capitals, rising from a base with diaper pattern, two bands of thunder-pattern and on shaped feet with richly carved foliage.

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On the body and on its domed cover, are the Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury amid luxuriant scrolls, with borders of thunder-pattern and arabesques. The handles are supported with discs bearing the character *shou* (long life); and the whole is surmounted with a finial in mutton-fat jade beautifully carved in open work with flowers and birds. The Flower Vases are square in section, on bases similar to that of the Incense Burner, and with boldly projecting knops and wide mouths. The knops are decorated with foliated scrolls, in the centre being a rebus consisting of a bat and a musical stone, signifying happiness and good fortune. Above and below are bold leaf-shaped ornaments, with thunder-pattern and scrolls. The Pricket Candlesticks are on similar bases, on which rise inverted domes with the character, long life, bats, lotus blossoms, thunder-pattern, etc. The wide drip-pan and other details are decorated with floral scrolls and foliage. The vases and candlesticks have engraved brass mounts. The whole is richly carved in deep red, relieved with green and orange-vermilion.

Incense Burner : height, 18 inches ; width, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; depth, 6 inches.

Vases : height, 15 inches by 6 inches square.

Candlesticks : height, $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches square.

Ming Dynasty (late)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate II.—CIRCULAR PLAQUE, FRAMED FOR A TABLE SCREEN

The decoration of this plaque consists mainly of a bold rendering of the character *shou* (long life) filled in with flying cranes and phoenixes (*feng*) alternately with tails of four feathers and floriated scrolls, and cloud-pattern on a curious diaper of concentric circles. The rest of the circle has, outside the character, a varied collection of emblems, including the double coin, coral, painting and sacred jewel, with cloud-patterns and flowers on a svastika diaper ground ; the whole enclosed within a border of conventional blossoms. The frame is of hard wood, with inner border of thunder-pattern, the angles incised with scrolls and inlaid with green ; the outer border with floral scrolls in relief. On the reverse is an engraved poem entitled "Eulogy on the Stars of Wealth, Prosperity and Longevity, composed by the Emperor"; and consisting of passages from the Book of Odes, the Book of Changes, and the Book of History, strung together so as to make a semblance of continuity and signed "Calligraphed by the Minister, Lu Fei-ch'ih." This gives the clue to the general symbolism of

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the whole composition ; and, in conjunction with the conspicuous use of the phoenix in the design, suggests that the screen was made for the use of an Empress. The plaque is carved in lacquer of three layers, mainly red, and relieved with black and yellow.

Diameter, $8\frac{7}{8}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*about Chia Ching*)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 12.—CIRCULAR COVERED BOX FOR CEREMONIAL GIFT

One of a pair of covered boxes of a form often occurring in lacquer-ware and occasionally in enamels, which have often been termed rice-bowls, but were more probably intended for gifts of fruit or cake on auspicious occasions. The decoration of the cover consists of a closely massed design of peony blossoms and foliage around the character *shou* and within a border of thunder-pattern. Below this is a border of highly conventionalised bats, with bands of flowers and foliage. The interior is of gold lacquer.

Height, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter, 18 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 12.—BOX FOR SWEETMEATS, BAT-SHAPED

This box would probably have been made to enclose a gift of sweetmeats on some ceremonial occasion. In form it represents a bat, of which the highly conventionalised details appear only on the cover, with a central ornament consisting of the character *shou* in combination with the svastika, a rebus, with the bat, signifying ten thousand years of happiness. The perpendicular sides are decorated with elaborate designs of thunder-pattern embodying the svastika form ; and the whole of the ground is diapered. In carved red lacquer, the interior and base black.

Height, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; width, $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; depth, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 13.—BOX AND COVER, PEACH-SHAPED

A box of this unusual magnificence must have been made for some very exceptional occasion. The design carries out the suggestion of the form ; and consists of a peach-tree, bearing flowers and fruit, springing from a rock, with, also, a pair of bats. The stem of the tree is of carved wood ;

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and flowers, fruit and foliage are executed in green and yellow jade, lapis lazuli, turquoise, amethystine quartz and carved red lacquer, on a diapered ground of red lacquer. The interior is also of a character rarely seen in work of this class, being sumptuously adorned with gold lacquer, having bats, fishes and various other auspicious emblems in low relief—a rare example of Chinese gold lacquer of high quality. The peach in combination with the bats forms a rebus symbolical of long life and happiness for the recipient of the gift enclosed within—but, as in the case of Japanese ceremonial presentations, the donor would expect the box itself to be returned to him.

Height, 7 inches ; width, 15 inches ; depth, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 14.—TABLE WITH GRAPE-VINE PATTERN

This table, although it cannot claim to have been actually made for Imperial use, so far as is suggested by its ornament, is yet of very high quality and quite exceptional in design, which consists solely of an all-over pattern, most ingeniously and skilfully distributed—of grape vines amid which squirrels are playing. The theme forms a refreshing contrast to the more formal decorative motives generally used by the designers of Chinese red lacquer. The subject alludes to a well-known Chinese poem. The technique of the lacquer is unusual, for instead of being cut sharply it has rather the effect of having been modelled, all sharp edges and projections being cleverly eliminated, with great advantage to the practical use of the table. The ornament is, moreover, further protected with plain ribs on the outer rims. In the treatment of the vine, one cannot help seeing an echo of ornament on ancient Roman silver. The motive occurs frequently on ancient mirrors and probably represents one of the earliest effects of foreign influence in Chinese decorative art—in this case the source—Greek—being that also which inspired the Roman silversmiths. Dr. F. Hirth illustrated several of these mirrors in *Fremde Einflüsse in der Chinesischen Kunst* (1896) of which Figs. 12 and 14 are specially worth considering in this connection.

The legs are of interesting and characteristic form, breaking into scrolls reminiscent of the sacred fungus, with which the *jui* (sceptres) are also associated.

The table is in remarkably good condition considering its age. The colour is admirable and the construction unimpaired. Although in no way

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definitely suggesting European influence, it is far more in accordance with Western taste than the usual forms of Chinese lacquer—in fact the design, with very little more alteration than the necessary transposition into a repeating pattern, would be excellent in a wall paper or textile fabric.

Height, width and length, 2 feet 9½ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 15.—GARDEN BOX-SEAT

A good example of the furniture of a Chinese formal garden is supplied by this interesting object. It is square in section, with curved sides, on each of which is the boldly designed lion-headed dragon, the mask forming the centre. Those on two of the sides are in bold relief. The circular compartments containing these, are on a ground of floral diaper pattern within richly shaped arabesque borders enclosing floral scrolls based on the lotus and prunus blossoms amid elaborate foliage. Above and below are borders of "nipples," thunder-pattern and scrolls. The seat is diapered with svastika pattern within a border of thunder-fret. The decoration is principally in carved red and green on buff lacquer, the band of nipples being in red on incised buff.

Height, 18 inches ; in section, 15½ inches square.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 16.—FLOWER-VASE FOR CEREMONIAL USE

This vase is of special interest to students of ornament inasmuch as its decoration is mainly based on themes such as are found on bronzes of the T'ang period, and having, also, a curious flavour of Pacific and Central American patterns. The body of the vase is divided into oblong panels, each inclosing two or three compositions, the chief element being a double-ended scroll, the terminals of which suggest the heads of grotesque animals. Scrolls of this sort, one may remark, incidentally and without straining for extreme parallels, are found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts contemporary with T'ang. They are simply due, in all probability, to a primitive appreciation of the interest added to decoration by a suggestion of animal life. Within these elements are other grotesque birds and scrolls of varied character, bordered with similar ornaments and enclosed with thunder-pattern. Prominent among the ornaments on the base and neck is the "recumbent silk worm" theme ; while the upper part of the neck is patterned with boldly drawn, alternating, triangular compartments of

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thunder-frets divided by a border of bosses of incurved scrolls. The vase is of carved lacquer, chiefly red ; the neck being on a diapered ground of olive-green and the base of plain dark green lacquer on buff. The stand, of hard wood, is contemporary and finely carved in similar style. The mouth is fitted with a brass mount, engraved with a pattern of prunus-blossoms on ice and pierced for five sprays of flowers. From the Summer Palace, Peking.

Height, $28\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; width, $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 17.—VASE FROM THE SUMMER PALACE

This vase, one of a pair in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was brought from the Summer Palace of Yuan Ming Yuan, which was sacked by the Anglo-French expedition of 1860 ; and is a remarkably fine specimen of the high standard of technical excellence achieved in the Imperial workshops fostered by Ch'ien Lung. The decoration of each consists of a magnificent composition of the Nine Dragons, a mystic number, wheeling through masses of whirling clouds in pursuit of the Sacred Jewels of Omnipotence. The feet have leaf patterns with modified thunder-fret ; and the mouths are finished with gilt brass mounts, engraved with the same motive. The vases are carved in red lacquer only of a pure coral colour and in unusual depth. Such pieces must have taken many months to complete and would alone justify the claims put forward to a high position in the arts for Chinese lacquer-ware of the best quality.

Height, $37\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter, $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 18.—PANEL, THE TAOIST PARADISE

On a diapered background of red lacquer is represented a scene in the Taoist Paradise. Shou Lao stands under a tree to the left, on a terraced island with elaborate railing. He wields the sceptre (*ju-i*) denoting his high rank, and near him are two attendants, one on the bank awaiting the approach of a boat containing offerings of flowers and jewels, described by Dr. Bushell as offerings from Si Wang Mu, the so-called Fairy Queen. Singly, and at intervals, other attendants approach, crossing by a foot-bridge from another island, on which are a pavilion and trees and bearing gifts—a staff, on which is tied a scroll, the peach of immortality, a pilgrim's gourd and the “ box of good gifts,” held by two boys, the “ genii of union

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and harmony." On the near bank, to the right, is Shou Lao's stag with another attendant. These figures and other details are encrusted in finely carved white and coloured jade, malachite and imitation lapis lazuli. Height, $30\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; width, 43 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 19.—A PAIR OF JARS WITH COVERS

Each of these jars is decorated with four well-proportioned arabesque compartments displaying two Sages with boy attendants in a rocky landscape with pavilions, trees, bridges, etc. In the angles above and below are the Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury ; the design being completed with bands of thunder-fret in leaf-shaped panels. Around the necks are panels of flowers. On the hat-shaped covers are smaller arabesque compartments, also with Sages and their attendants, the whole of the background being richly diapered. In deeply cut carved red lacquer, on contemporary stands of hard-wood formed with incurved lotus-leaves. An unusual feature is the weighting of the covers with lead in order to ensure stability.

Height, $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 20.—STAND FOR CRYSTAL BALL

Although small objects, chiefly boxes, were occasionally made in solid lacquer, elaborate compositions which can fairly be described as sculpture in the proper sense of the term, are seldom seen. The stand now reproduced is, in part, on a basis of carved wood ; but, to a considerable extent is actually cut in lacquer and with remarkable dexterity and vigour. It represents a group of Imperial sea-dragons rising from waves beating on rocks to grasp the Sacred Jewel represented by the crystal globe which surmounts the composition. In carved and pierced red lacquer.

Height, 18 inches ; diameter, 6 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 21.—VASE FOR IMPERIAL GIFT, ON PORCELAIN

The possibilities of porcelain as a basis for lacquer are demonstrated in this vase, of which both the base and the interior are well glazed. The principal

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theme of the decoration is a scene in which T'an-mo (Bodhidharma, *Jap.* Daruma) is seated on a rock, his shoes lying in front of him and with a halo round his head, interviewing a standing sage holding a *vajra* (the thunderbolt emblem), in his right, and a bowl in his left hand. In the landscape are a pine and other trees, a waterfall and large rocks, on two of which are the inscriptions given below, the lettering touched with gold. Around the neck are two dragons in waves ; and the vase is finished with a finely engraved brass rim. The whole is in well-executed and deeply carved red lacquer which shows no signs of deterioration. It should probably be placed in the later period of Ch'ien Lung's reign.

We are indebted to Mr. Arthur Waley for the translations following. He notes that the design does not entirely correspond with the words of the poems and suggests that the carver misunderstood some of the terms.

1. *Eulogy of the Lohan, composed by the Emperor.*

In his left hand he holds his Indian scroll-bag,
In his right, a set of food-bowls.
At home or abroad, sitting up or lying down
He will never be separated from them, or put them aside.
Long ago when Buddha was in the world
He saved this hoary old man
By preaching the law in a voice as powerful
As the roaring of an angry lion.

2. *Eulogy of the Lohan, composed by the Emperor.*

His tense posture and clasped hands
What secret power do they imply ?
He who has signs and he who lacks signs,
Which is the true patriarch ?
Behind his head is the round disc
Like the moon just at its full.
The service of his feet he needs no more
And has kicked off his straw shoes.

The Lohan (saint), T'an-mo, the first of the Chinese Patriarchs, was an Indian prince who came to China about A.D. 520 and remained in meditation for nine years in a temple at Lo Yang ; at the end of which time, he

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had lost the use of his feet—hence the allusion in the two last lines of the second poem.

Height, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 22.—BOX FOR JEWELS

An oval box ; carved above and below with a continuous design of lions sporting amid foaming waves. Unusual also is the colour of the lacquer in this instance—a pure olive-green. The interior is lacquered black. On the base is an inscription justifying the identification of the animal—which otherwise might well be a tiger—the translation being “ Ch'ien Lung period, Lion Treasure-box.”

Height, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; length, 8 inches ; width, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 23.—IMPERIAL CHAIR OF STATE

This chair, one of a set of three from the Summer Palace, Peking, supplies another good example of the sumptuous furniture in which the Emperor Ch'ien Lung took delight. The handsome scrolled back is deeply carved with a noble sea-dragon, five-clawed and full-face, rising from the waves and holding above his head the circular character *shou*, in red lacquer. The border of this panel, the arms, thunder-pattern in form, and the seat are carved with a running pattern of lotus flowers and scrolls in red on a green svastika-diapered ground. The frame, legs and rails have a pattern of bats in clouds, with the musical stone in the centre of the front, forming a rebus which may be interpreted “ Good Fortune and Happiness.” Both the seat and the back of the centre panel are incised with a representation of an Imperial dragon in clouds, grasping the Sacred Jewel. The front foot-rail has a protective ornament, dictated by sound common sense—a covering plate of bronze engraved with the lotus.

Height, 37 inches ; depth, $21\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 24.—IMPERIAL THREEFOLD SCREEN

Behind an Imperial throne, such as is illustrated in the Frontispiece, stood a massive screen (*feng-p'ing*) which might, according to Dr. Bushell, have as many as twelve folds. The notorious Empress Dowager of China is

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represented, in a photograph illustrating a paper¹ by Sir Claude Macdonald, on the Defence of the Legations in 1900, as seated on a throne of this character, placed in front of a massive threefold screen. On either side are stands, on which are dishes of fruit, of the same sort as those reproduced in Plate 25. With the screen now to be described, we are therefore able to illustrate a complete set of the Imperial equipment in this respect. This screen is of a quite unusual character. In the first place, its extraordinarily effective decoration consists of lettering only—but lettering so beautifully executed and spaced as to make it possible even for Western critics to understand why Calligraphy takes its place in China as one of the Four Liberal Arts; and fine writing or well-executed inscriptions have, for centuries, taken equal rank with painting and sculpture. In this case, the characters are superbly drawn; and yet, without in the least detracting from their general effect, every stroke is enriched with minute but most delicately executed diaper patterns—chiefly hexagonal with a conventional flower in the centre. The inscriptions are in red on a brown diaper ground; and from the admirable translation by Mr. Arthur Waley of the British Museum, which we are permitted to quote, we gather that the screen was made to commemorate the long lives and domestic virtues of two worthy citizens.

The inscriptions, as translated by Mr. Arthur Waley, read :—

Left-hand panel.

Poem made by the Emperor and bestowed upon the centenarian Ku Ch'ao-chio of the district of Lung-ch'üan, province of Kiangsi; and upon Chang Tzü-hui, allowed to use the title of the "veteran of Szechuan," in whose house five generations dwell together.

"The Dispenser of Good according to his wisdom sends
down a hundred blessings.
He has favoured in Kiangsi the family Ku and in
Szechuan the family Chang.
In one case the head of a family has reached the
stadium of a hundred;
In the other case a happy household is composed of five
generations.
By abstemious eating and well-mixed drinking the
life of each has been multiplied by three;

¹ Japan Society, *Transactions XII*, p. 4, 1913.

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The husband ploughing, the wife weaving, the
whole household has prospered.
In the new Spring may they often sing stanzas
of plenty and joy ;
May what they pray for be given them and what
they have be fulfilled and their record not broken."

Centre panel.

Poem made by the Emperor to celebrate the old age of Chang Tzŭ-hui of Ta-chou in Ssechuan, in whose house five generations dwell together.

" To the West of the River have been specially recorded
omens of happiness and prosperity ;
Old age extended to unwonted years of joy
has been accorded to a certain Chang.
He who reaches the stadium of a hundred has
a right to the title ' shou ' (veteran) ;
How much the more he whose five generations live
in one home ? "

Right-hand panel.

" Each province was requested to report cases of centenarians and those who had five generations living in one house. Four additional cases were reported and copies of the poem composed by the Emperor in honour of the centenarian Chang Tzŭ-hui were sent to these other veterans.

In Chihli, Shantung and Kwangtung provinces four such families were found—those of Chang, Kuo, Liu and Chung. These are cases of rare preservation and we trust that nothing will happen to spoil their record.

Written by the minister Ts'ao Wên-t'an.

The reverse side of the screen furnishes us with an almost dramatic contrast. It is decorated with an all-over design, drawn with great spirit, of bats and clouds in flat gold or black. The frame and stand, of polished hard wood, are also singularly effective ; especially in regard to the bold dragon-headed scroll-work which forms the cresting.

Height, 9 feet 10½ inches ; width, 9 feet 6 inches.

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Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

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Plate 25.—IMPERIAL STAND FOR FRUIT OR FLOWERS

As stated in the description of the Imperial Screen reproduced (Plate 24) in this volume, the Imperial Throne was flanked with a pair of stands, on which were placed bowls of fruit or flowers or, perhaps, incense burners. The stand now illustrated is one of such a pair. It is of rare and striking form. The table is five-lobed, its edges decorated with three principal bands of ornament; the upper and lower with lotus flowers and foliage, while in that of the centre band, somewhat withdrawn, the foliage is varied with the svastika and thunder-pattern alternately. This is supported by a group of five boldly carved figures, the upper parts of which are shaped as highly conventionalised phoenix heads, from which rise slender balusters; while they terminate downwards each in a single leg and scrolled foot, ornamented also with thunder-frets. The five-lobed double base is richly decorated with foliage and flowers. The work is chiefly in carved red lacquer of fine colour; with underlayers of green and buff.

Height, $36\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter, $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

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Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 26.—PANEL, LANDSCAPE

The panel here illustrated is one of a pair made for wall decoration; and representing a class of work which, during the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, and, apparently, at his own behest, was carried to a very high pitch of technical perfection. Those best known were made to commemorate the victories of his army in Eastern Turkestan, in 1766, and the suppression of the Formosa Rebellion about twenty years later; and show the movements of troops, with eulogistic poems, etc., carved generally in red and brown lacquer. The examples of this pictorial treatment of lacquer-work now under consideration, give us pure landscape, which loses nothing in decorative value by reason of its characteristic conventions. The actual subjects have not, so far, been identified. That reproduced has for its centre of interest, a rocky island, mainly occupied by a group of buildings evidently of some importance, having a two-storied pavilion overlooking the lake or river and various subsidiary edifices, with willow and other trees. The near shore is fringed with water-lilies; and, near by, three fishing-boats are seen, one of them working with trained cormorants. The projection of another island or of the near shore is seen in the right foreground; while the distance is occupied with a range of curiously contorted mountains beyond the water and a wooded promontory to the left. The second

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of the pair is similar in treatment, but less successful as a composition. The design deals almost entirely with a mass of well-wooded and rocky country, overlooking a river. Near the summit, on the right is a group of imposing buildings from which a steep path leads to a quay on which is an elaborate gate-house, fronted with a ceremonial arch. Various small boats are in the river, and part of a building can be seen in the left foreground, on the near bank. These panels have their designs carved with extraordinary vigour and unusual depth in red lacquer. The water is of a greenish-black, which in the subject of our illustration, breaks into definite green for the crests of the little waves in the foreground. In both, the sky is simply left to a brown diaper pattern.

Height, 5 feet 3 inches ; width, 3 feet 2 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
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Plate 27.—VASE

One of a pair of vases, of which the ovoid bodies are decorated with rectangular compartments in which are represented vases of flowers, the emblems of the Four Liberal Arts and similar objects, within a border of thunder-fret and on a trellis enclosing svastika. Between these panels is a filling of foliated scrolls and the necks and feet have leaf ornaments with thunder-pattern and borders of the latter pattern. In carved lacquer of three layers, red, green and yellowish-buff—the red being the chief.

Height, $15\frac{5}{8}$ inches ; diameter, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Frontispiece (front view), Plate 28 (back).—THRONE OF THE EMPEROR CH' IEN LUNG

One of the principal treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and certainly the finest example of carved lacquer yet seen in this country, is the Throne of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Mr. George Swift, J.P., in 1922. It is said to have come from the Hunting Palace of Nan-hai-tze, near Peking, and to be one of a pair, the other being still, one hopes, preserved in the capital. There appears to be absolutely no doubt as to its authenticity ; while, as a work of art, its merits speak for themselves ; and it may be taken as representing the standard of highest achievement of the craftsmen of the Imperial workshop—and of the period of its origin.

The throne forms a broad, low seat, with four boldly incurved legs,

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shaped like elephants' trunks, and resting on a double stand, with low-shaped supports. The back and side-pieces are shaped, and in three separate pieces, fitting into slots. The shallow curves of these three portions of the composition, are emphasised by bold scrolls in high relief, placed well within the outer edges. In each of these, is a pictorial composition, that in the centre consisting of an elephant, the sacred animal of the Buddhist Law, bearing on his back the Vase of Jewels ; a rebus which has been interpreted as "Peace reigns in the North." If that is an allusion to the victories in Eastern Turkestan, it suggests 1766 as a possible date for the work. The elephant is accompanied by attendants, one with a banner and others with various symbolical objects ; and the scene is laid in a rocky landscape with diapered background. The remainder of the space is filled with conventional cloud-pattern forming a background on which are five-clawed dragons hunting sacred jewels, one of which is grasped by the full-face dragon over the centre panel. Among the clouds, also, are bats—emblems of Happiness.

The panels in the side-wings represent foreigners bearing gifts, in similar landscapes. On each side are three—those on the right of distinctly Indo-Buddhistic type of face and dress, carrying the *vajra* or thunderbolt emblem, what looks like an ape, and a bowl of peaches respectively. On the left, the man in front is turbaned, has ear-rings and bears a vase with a large branch of coral ; on his right is one with a banner with long feather-shaped pennon and surmounted with three plumes. In the rear, to the right is a bare-footed soldier, with high conical hat and, apparently, a long-sheathed straight-bladed sword with large pommel. Within and without the scrolls of these wings are bats in clouds ; and each is surmounted with an Imperial dragon. The reverse of the wings is similarly decorated. That of the back has a rich design of bats, lotus flowers and foliated scrolls, with a central rebus consisting of five bats, a musical stone, a pair of fishes and a lotus flower, signifying the Five Blessings, Good Fortune, Conjugal Felicity and Fertility and Purity. The seat itself is of flat lacquer, with peony scrolls, peaches, bats and svastika in olive-green and flat gold on a vermillion ground, and within a border of black thunder-fret. It is provided with a beautiful cushion of contemporary brocade patterned on a ground of peach-blossom colour. The carved lacquer is chiefly red, cut through to inner layers of light and dark olive-green, brown and yellow.

Height, 3 feet 11 inches ; width, 4 feet 1½ inches ; depth, 3 feet.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHINESE LACQUER

Plate 29.—COVERED BOWL FOR CEREMONIAL GIFT

This is a large bowl of a type by no means uncommon but unusually well executed. Its cover is decorated with a circular compartment containing a richly ornamented bowl, in which are various emblems of good portent, conspicuous among them being the Endless Knot, Coral, etc. From this rises a rainbow-hued emanation surmounted with the character *Ch'un* (spring), in the centre of which is Shou Lao seated with an attendant and his familiar stag. On either side is an Imperial dragon in clouds. Around the bowl are compartments, with the Eight Sages and their boy attendants, and also the Eight Precious Things, on a ground of lattice-work, enclosing a floral diaper. In carved lacquer of four layers, red, green, buff and aubergine—a rare example of the use of the latter. The carving is very deep—not less than a quarter of an inch in places. A similar bowl in three colours is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 655-1872.

Height, 5 inches ; diameter, 21 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 29.—BOX FOR INCENSE

A four-lobed incense box of solid red lacquer, the lid carved with a sage bearing a staff, and boy attendant carrying a manuscript box, in a landscape with tree and rocks, within a border of leaf ornament ; the sides decorated with flowers in four compartments on diapered ground. The interior is lacquered black, inscribed "Treasure Incense Box."

Height, 2 inches ; diameter, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (*dated*, Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 29.—BOX FOR INCENSE

A five-lobed incense box, the lid with a group of three peaches, flowers and foliage, the latter lacquered in colours, the peaches diapered. In carved lacquer of two layers, red and brown, the interior black.

Height, 2 inches ; width, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 30.—BOWL OF WOVEN BAMBOO, WITH PANEL IN COLOURS

A circular box and cover, the upper part of which is of finely woven bamboo with a circular compartment of flat lacquer in gold and various

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colours. Within the circle is an arabesque compartment with a richly decorated pavilion, at the entrance to which a lady of high rank, attended by a female fan-bearer is receiving a distinguished visitor, also with a fan-bearer, whose white horse is held by a servant. Within the pavilion, a woman can be seen with a bowl and ewer on a table. The colours used are gold, red, green, slate-blue and white on a ground of rich crimson. Around the base are chrysanthemum blossoms and svastika diaper in gold on red, with a mark in gold which has not been identified. It is suggested that the subject represents the visit of the Emperor Muh Wang (B.C. 1001-947) to Si Wang Mu, the Western Royal Mother, at the Lake of Gems in the West, where the Peach-tree of Immortality grew. The painting is of high quality and shows a wider range of colour than was used by the Japanese until quite modern times. It may certainly be placed in the Ming period, probably in the reign of Wan Li.

Height, $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches ; diameter, $11\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (Wan Li)

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 31.—SAUCERS (TWO) FOR WINE CUPS

The modern Chinese lacquer in gold on black is well known by reason of the large quantities brought to this country from Canton, by the tea merchants of the 19th century. Although, at its best, it is by no means without merit, it can only be looked on as a commercial product, made especially for export and for the benefit of Europeans. The examples now reproduced are in quite another category. They are chosen from a complete set of five—the usual number—and are most delicately lacquered on woven bamboo of extraordinary fineness. In this respect they may be compared with the bowl illustrated on Plate 30 ; and with a pair of saucers decorated in red, blue and other colours on flat gold, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. W. 182-1923. Those under notice have designs in fine gold and red on a black ground, the subjects represented being sages with disciples and attendants in moonlit gardens with buildings and various trees. The borders are of flowers and butterflies, and thunder-fret respectively. In the opinion of Mr. Imaizumi, the Japanese expert of the Imperial Museum, Tokyo, this work especially influenced the Japanese School of Shiomi Masanari.

Height, $\frac{5}{8}$ inch ; diameter, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

From the Collection of James Orange, Esq.

CHINESE LACQUER

Plate 32.—SET OF BOXES FOR SWEETMEATS

Examples of Chinese gold or silver lacquer in relief, in any degree comparable with the Japanese ware of this kind, are of quite exceptional rarity. With a character quite of their own, the set of boxes now reproduced will, however, hold their place in any company. They are delicately shaped, and yet the designs are boldly conceived and executed. These are all symbolical of good fortune of one sort or another ; the subjects represented being a Mandarin Duck, Water Buffalo, Peony and Aster, a pair of Peaches and of Bats, and two fans of different shapes, one with Peonies and thunder-pattern on the handle and the other with homing Geese. The relief is, for work of this kind, considerable ; and the lacquer of gold and silver, tinted with red, is of high quality.

Height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; width, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

From the Collection of Dr. W. Perceval Yetts.

Plate 33.—PANEL FROM A FOURFOLD SCREEN

We reproduce one panel from a fourfold screen of unusual technical interest, inasmuch as a good deal of the decoration is in bold relief, of the kind called by the Japanese *takamakiye* ; a process not much used by Chinese lacquerers and rarely with the skill shown in this example. It represents a hunting-scene set in a landscape which has points of resemblance with that illustrated in Plate 34, particularly in regard to the plank-roads and bridges over which the huntsmen fearlessly gallop. In this case, however, there is no trace of European influence ; and the costume and other accessories are essentially native. The decoration is chiefly in gold, red and brown, but other colours are used ; and the effect is enhanced by the use of incrustated ivory, shell and hard stones. The work may be ascribed to the Canton district, and in the treatment of details, particularly of the foliage, there are many similarities with that illustrated in Plate 35.

Height, 3 feet $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches ; width (each panel), 1 foot 9 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 34S.—SCREEN (THREE PANELS)

The screen was one of the first articles of Chinese furniture to appeal to European taste ; and towards the end of the 17th century became perhaps the most important of the exports from that country to Europe, where it was not only popular in its original form but was cut up to be remade

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into many other articles. Canton seems to have been the leading market for this work, and the close touch with Europeans existing at this port is frequently reflected in the designs of lacquered screens made there or in the neighbourhood. Among them, the hunting scene seems to have been a great favourite ; and we reproduce a portion of a screen giving a typical example of this class, and notable also as being, in all other respects, an unusually good specimen of flat lacquer of its period. The scene represents a fort on a rocky shore, defended by a battlemented tower on the left, appearing above clouds. Near it is a European ship of war, with broadside of eight guns and lateral tricolor flag of orange, green and red. On the shore, to the left, is what may be a church with cross outside. To the right, near the top of the screen is a tent with decorated roof, near which men are cutting up a deer ; and in various parts of the landscape are Europeans of various degree, one cloaked and mounted and with an escort of three matchlock-men, others with guns and cross-bows, greyhounds, etc. Above and below is a border with a portion of the Hundred Antiques. It seems possible that the scene is intended to represent Macao, which was occupied by the Portuguese early in the 17th century. Semedo gives a good account of its fortifications and general condition at the time he was in China ; and the bulk of the Chinese trade done there was naturally with Canton, from dues on which an income of from 40,000 to 50,000 crowns was then derived. This suggestion is supported by J. Nieuhoff's engraving of 1655 (reproduced in "The Chater Collection" by James Orange, 1925, p. 301), which shows a circular fort on the left and a Dutch ship entering the harbour. The whole treatment of the subject is characteristically Chinese ; and it is curious to note how well the artist, without incongruity, brings into his decorative scheme the European costumes—full-bottomed wigs and all. The lacquer is of good quality and the colours particularly brilliant, including vermilion, blue, green, orange, brown, black and white.

Height, 7 feet 3 inches ; width (each panel), 1 foot 8½ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)

From the Collection of Ernest Rennie, Esq.

Plate 35.—SCREEN (PORTIONS OF CRESTING AND OF ONE PANEL) MADE FOR THE EMPEROR LEOPOLD I

About the year 1700, the Jesuit Fathers in China sent to Europe a pair of sixfold screens, made to the order of, or as a gift to the Emperor Leopold I of Austria. One was presented by his son, the Emperor Charles

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VI (1711-1740) to a Sicilian noble during the Austrian occupation of that country, 1720-1734. The other is now in the collection of Earl Spencer, in whose family it has been for many years. These screens, of which we reproduce the cresting and the upper part of the decoration of one panel, are of particular interest and historical value. The finely carved cresting includes in its design the Austrian double-headed eagle; and the screen itself, of flat lacquer, is executed in gold of various shades on a warm red ground. The back has floral ornament in black-and-white on dull red. The design represents a hunting scene, in which only Europeans, in the costume of the late 17th century, are taking part. An interesting detail is the introduction of women in European costume on the veranda of a pavilion. In some respects, one seems to recognise details of the buildings which appear in the screen illustrated in Plate 34—whether this is due merely to a convention popular with Cantonese artists, or that it actually pretends to give a view of Macao, one cannot say with certainty. The foliage of the trees is treated almost exactly, so far as regards the style of drawing, as in Plate 33. Height, 6 feet 7 inches; width (each panel), 1 foot 9 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)

Reproduced by permission of R. Freeman Smith, Esq.

Plate 36.—CABINET

This cabinet is of unusual and characteristic form, in no way resembling the well-known Japanese articles of a similar kind. It is rectangular, with folding doors; divided, within, into two compartments, each providing two open recesses separated by a drawer. On the top are two shallow, box-shaped erections, each with a drawer. The fret-shaped handle, elaborate fastening and mounts are of chased bronze, with remains of gilding. With the exception of the fronts of the two interval drawers, which are of gold lacquer, the whole of the decoration is of raised gold and silver (similar to the Japanese *takamakiye*) on rich dark wine-coloured lacquer flecked with gold in the manner of *nashiji*. On the doors is represented a rocky landscape, with pavilions, a terrace on which is a tall vase with a pair of rods, aged pine-trees and a pair of cranes. On each side is a vase of flowers with four of the Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury. On the top of each of the upper boxes is an elephant bearing the sacred treasures; and on the lower part of the cover, are peaches, chrysanthemums, bats and the longevity character *shou*. The inside of the doors has a rebus of the bat and musical stone, with lotus blossom and chrysanthemum scrolls, within a border of bats, flowers and *shou* characters. The fronts of the inner drawers

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have flowers and fret pattern in relief, in gold on gold ground. This is an unusually good example of what the Chinese could do in that art of lacquer in relief which their Japanese rivals carried to technical perfection. It almost certainly derives from the South—probably Canton, and may be dated early in the second half of the 17th century.

Height, $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; width, $13\frac{3}{8}$ inches ; depth, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi, *early*)
From the Collection of James Orange, Esq.

Plates 37, 38.—PICNIC SET WITH OVERHANGING COVER

This is a brilliant example of the Chinese use of flat colours, combined with carved red lacquer ; and both in the perfected technique of the Ch'ien Lung period. It is octagonal in plan ; and consists of a stand, on which are three receptacles, the lower two being empty and the upper fitted with a nest of one large and eight smaller boxes. Over these is a cover of carved red lacquer, with open sides permitting the decoration of the receptacles to be seen. With the exception of this cover, the ornament is in painted lacquer and in three bands ; that in the middle consisting of lotus blossoms in coral red, picked out with cream and with dark green foliage ; while above and below is a diaper of formal chrysanthemum flowers in white. The angles have svastika diaper pattern, in red, with lotus flowers above and below, and strapwork. The smaller boxes have lotus flowers in red and warm cream colour with borders of fret pattern. The surface of the stand has lotus and other flowers in cream, red and purple starred amid interlacing foliage of a rich green—a remarkably beautiful and effective design. At its sides are panels with highly conventionalised *feng* birds ; and the eight shaped feet are decorated with lotus and scrolls. The cover is in deeply carved ($\frac{3}{16}$ -inch) red lacquer. On its upper surface is a garden near a lake with plank bridge, willow and maple trees and distant mountains ; with two sages and their boy attendants. The ribs have floral scrolls. This piece is remarkable, not only for the excellence of its design, but for the range of colours used—the white or cream colour, purple and fine green being very unusual in Chinese and still more rare in Japanese lacquer. A similar, but less elaborate piece is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the colours of which cannot compare, for brilliancy, with the specimen under review.

Height, $9\frac{7}{8}$ inches ; stand, $8\frac{7}{8}$ inches ; square.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

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Plate 39.—NEST OF SWEETMEAT DISHES

Sets of dishes of this kind are not infrequently found in Canton painted enamels ; but the specimen now reproduced is a rare example of its production in lacquer-ware, and remarkable also for its colour—the decoration being in flat gold on a fine, deep blue. It consists of a circular tray and central dish ; around the latter eight segmental dishes being neatly fitted, each decorated with one of the symbols, set in cloud pattern, of the Eight Taoist Immortal Genii—of which it thus supplies a clear and easily intelligible representation. In the centre is a rebus for Happiness and Long Life, a spray of peaches, with bats and asters. The borders are of thunder-fret and the bases lacquered black.

Height, 1 inch ; diameter, $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 40.—PANEL FOR WALL DECORATION

In this panel, the decoration consists entirely of a magnolia tree in blossom, on the branches of which are seated a pair of pheasants, within a border of thunder-fret, varied with eight arabesque compartments enclosing conventional lotus sprays. This design is carried out entirely in inlaid shell, on which lines completing the fine drawing of the flowers and foliage are engraved and filled in with colour ; the ground being a brilliant red.

Size, $40\frac{1}{4}$ inches square.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.

Plate 41.—EWER FOR CEREMONIAL USE

This ewer, but for its characteristically Chinese handle, is strongly reminiscent of Persian forms. Its body is four-sided and pear-shaped, with long, graceful neck and spout. The basic material is pewter, lacquered black and decorated with sprays of flowers with birds, insects, etc., in compartments on either side, encrusted in shell, ivory, carved red lacquer and lacquer composition, within borders of thickly placed *tesseræ* of shell, reminding one of the Japanese *kirikane*. The foot has a diaper pattern in shell.

Height, 14 inches ; width, 7 inches ; depth, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (Wan Li), the panels restored in the Ch'ien Lung period.
Victoria and Albert Museum.

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Plate 42.—EWER FOR TEMPLE USE

An early and remarkable example of lac *burgautée* work, of wood, lined and bound with silver, cylindrical in form with projecting spout, chain and ball handle, and shaped mouth. The decoration, in inlay of gold, silver and shell on black lacquer, is in three lateral bands. The upper of these has four-clawed dragons in clouds ; those below represent garden scenes with sages and boy attendants. The silver-gilt bands are chased with dragons, birds and various animals and diaper patterns, and the spout is well modelled in form of a dragon's head. The mount of the mouth has a running pattern of lotus flowers and leaves, and on the lid is a conventional flower.

Height, 20 inches ; diameter, $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 43.—PANEL FOR WALL DECORATION

In this panel, the use of inlaid shell is carried to its utmost limits ; the black lacquer in which it is embedded, only coming to the surface as the ground of the various diapers and of the clouds. The scene represents Shou Lao seated in a pavilion on the shore of a lake. Towards him, preceded by his stork, is a small procession of two acolytes, one bearing a pot and another with a peach and spray of flowers. They are followed by two attendants carrying a ceremonial fan and sword respectively. Near the pavilion is a palm-tree and, overhead, an aged pine. Above is the full moon and clouds. The whole is within a broad diaper of intersecting circles and florets. The shell is engraved and is all iridescent, producing an extraordinarily rich effect of colour in which peacock green and blue predominate.

Height, 13 inches ; width, 18 inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 44.—DOOR OF CABINET

The period of K'ang Hsi is distinguished by a freedom of design, especially in the treatment of subjects derived from Nature, such as flowers, which is altogether superior to the formalism that succeeded it during the reign of Ch'ien Lung. The "Door of a Cabinet," of which this illustration gives a reproduction, gives a typical instance of this quality. The decoration consists of a pair of Imperial Birds (*feng huang*), the emblems of the Empress, wheeling amid blossoming branches of the tree peony, typical of spring. Above is the full moon and a strip of cloud and, below, rocks

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and a bank of soil formed with shell-dust. The whole is within a border of fret-pattern. All the design is carried out in iridescent shell, the prevailing colours being green, gold and reddish-purple; the flowers and bodies of the birds being lightly, but skilfully engraved. The door is in two sections. It has a good hasp of bronze chased with foliated scrolls. The interior of the cabinet is of the usual type and without special features of interest.

Height, $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches; width, $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)

From the Collection of W. Reynolds Stephens, Esq.

Plate 45.—VASE, LAC *burgautée* ON PORCELAIN

Lac *burgautée* was occasionally applied to porcelain. Dr. Stephen Bushell describes a vase, then in his own collection, which is an example of this development; and is placed by him in the K'ang Hsi period (*Chinese Art*, II, Fig. 53). This is twenty-eight inches in height; and on white porcelain; the rims and interior being glazed and the exterior (left unglazed for the purpose) decorated with scenes of agricultural and village life in shell, partly tinted, gold and silver on black.

The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses three examples of lac *burgautée* on porcelain. A piece (807-1883) which is important on account of its size, though a little smaller than that formerly in the Bushell Collection, is a large vase, two feet one inch in height and circular in section, decorated with four sages, each with a boy attendant, in a bamboo grove near a lake, with bridge, pavilions, pagoda, etc.; and background of mountains under a full moon. This has the mark of Ch'eng-hua (A.D. 1465-1487); but is certainly Ch'ien Lung. The basis is white porcelain and the black lacquer ground, which is not of very good quality, is carried deeply into the interior. Another piece (1118-1883) is a cap stand, height $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches, with boys playing in a garden near a lake, with pines, bamboo, lotus flowers, etc., also in black ground but on a basis of rough unglazed porcelain. The third (1118-1883) is notable for its colour, which is that of light bronze shaded below into a good imitation of copper. This is a globular jar, with cover, $7\frac{5}{8}$ inches high and 9 inches in diameter with three sages and a boy on the bank of a lake, under the full moon. The basis is, again, white porcelain, with glazed foot and interior. The period is unquestionably Ch'ien Lung; and the lacquer is of quite good quality—its colour is very rare.

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The subject of our illustration is later in date and may with some certainty be ascribed to the Ch'ien Lung period of about the year 1760—when vases of this form were already being made at Liverpool. It is, at the base and neck, an oval, quatrefoil in section, forming a slightly shaped flattened oval at the shoulders. On either side are almost identical garden scenes in shaped compartments, each with a pavilion, pine and maple-trees springing from a slightly engraved rock, tree-peony, bamboo, a rustic bridge and lake on which is a boat. On the neck and sides are conventional flowers. The lacquer is on white porcelain, the base, rims and interior having a good glaze. The details are simple but effective ; and an excellent colour-scheme has been secured without the use of metals—the shell giving iridescent lights mainly of green and reddish-purple. The cover has only a band of flowers, etc., and plain knob.

Height, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)

From the Collection of W. Reynolds Stephens, Esq.

Plate 46.—BEAKER, COLOUR INCISED ON PORCELAIN

This interesting example of lacquer on porcelain was recently acquired for the British Museum, and has been fully described by Mr. R. L. Hobson in the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. XL, page 297. It affords an early specimen of a combination which is always rare ; and, in this instance, is remarkable from one particular point of view, namely, the treatment of the lacquer. The beaker consists of white porcelain with a minimum of blue, the latter occurring only in the written six-character mark of Wan Li (A.D. 1573–1620) in a reserved compartment on the rim and on the four-line mask handles on the sides. Otherwise, Mr. Hobson describes it as “ a strong solid body of clean white grain and smooth to the touch ; the interior has a thick glaze of rather impure white colour.” In his opinion, the rest of the surface was left not only unglazed, but rough “ to give a hold to the lacquer with which it is entirely covered to the thickness of about a twentieth of an inch.” No doubt this is so, as regards the absence of glaze ; but it may be pointed out that no especial roughness is needed to hold the lacquer, which would adhere very closely to a fine biscuit surface corresponding to the highly finished and polished surface of lacquer composition on fine wood which forms its ordinary basis. When the lacquer used was pure and well applied—in the case of Chinese lacquer, even in the Ming era, this was by no means a matter of course—there is no reason why it should have scaled.

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The other examples of lacquer on porcelain described herein, are both quite free from this defect.

The decoration is incised and in brown, green, red and dull yellow touched with gold. In this respect, as well as in the drawing of the decorative details, it offers an interesting comparison with the subject of Plate 47. Another example of incised lacquer occurs in the seat of the Imperial Chair (Plate 23) and we have seen a whole set of furniture decorated almost entirely in this manner and with a more or less similar colour-scheme. The fronts of the neck have each an Imperial dragon encircling the Sacred Jewel ; above is a ribbon forming the character *Shou* (Longevity), and, below, green waves with yellow crests and rocks. Mr. Hobson points out that these are the "jewel mountains in sea waves," mentioned in the list of designs used on porcelain of the Wan Li period. On either side are more dragons emerging from waves ; and, lower, in pairs, contending for the Jewel ; while the stem has the typical rock, wave and cloud pattern with lucky emblems.

Height, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty
British Museum.

Plate 47.—CIRCULAR PLAQUE

This plaque is of interest as providing an earlier version of the design executed in carved lacquer on the bowl illustrated in Plate 29, with which it is practically identical except that the Sacred Jewel now occupies the place of honour in the centre of the bowl of treasures, given in the other object, to the Endless Knot. This plaque, moreover, supplies an excellent example of incised lacquer—the *chinkinbori* of the Japanese—who adopted the method from China. The engraved lines are coloured with vermilion, crimson, purple, brown and yellow. The reverse is black. An earlier attribution of date is given to it, not only in respect of the technical execution, but also on account of the far greater breadth and vigour of the design.

Diameter, $17\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 48.—CUPS (A PAIR) AND A BOWL

One of the technical processes derived from China by the Japanese is that called by the latter *guri* (crook ring)—a word now said by Japanese philologists to be of uncertain but definitely foreign origin. It consists of alternate layers of lacquer of various colours, having a considerable depth, and

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carved in scroll or diaper patterns in a V-shaped section from the outer surface. The pair of cups and the bowl now illustrated are good examples of this method as practised in China. In each case, the layers of lacquer are, alternately, of black and red only. The pattern of the former is of bold scrolls, in the arrangement of which a little imagination enables one to identify grotesque masks which are suggestive of the "glutton" ogre *t'ao-t'ieh*, well described by Dr. Yetts in *Symbolism in Chinese Art*. The bowl has a geometrical pattern of a kind not occurring, so far as we are aware, in Japanese *guri*. A Pacific origin for this ornament seems within the bounds of possibility. In each case, the interior is lined with silver.

Cups : height, $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches ; diameter, $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

Bowl : height, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; diameter, $8\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

Ming Dynasty (*late*)

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi)

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 49.—TRAYS (TWO)

As examples of modern Foochow lacquer, we reproduce two specimens by no means without technical merit of a fairly high order. Each is boldly carved, in form of a lotus leaf supporting a blossom, the support consisting of a cleverly designed arrangement of the rest of the spray. The lacquer is of fine quality and surface, in delicately shaded green and brown, powdered with gold and silver dust.

Height, $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches ; width, 11 inches ; depth, $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

19th century (*middle*)

From the Collection of Mrs. Cooper and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 50.—TWELVEFOLD SCREEN, "COROMANDEL" LACQUER

Our illustrations of "Coromandel" work are taken from the two superb screens at South Kensington, which represent, perhaps, the highest standard of quality attained by the unknown but extraordinarily skilful artists who practised it. The first represents "The Taoist Genii paying homage to Shou Lao"—the God of Longevity (*Chu Hsien Ching Shou*)—a deification of Lao Tzŭ, the founder of the Taoist philosophy.

The scene is laid in the Taoist Paradise, in the centre of which Shou Lao is seated, with sceptre and sacred jewel. In front of him are his deer and storks, the "Twin Genii of Union and Harmony," and, to the right, the "Eight Taoist Immortals" (*Pa Hsien*) with their attributes. Other Taoist personages and symbols are distributed throughout the composition, which

CHINESE LACQUER

is framed with a border of trellis ornament in which the *shou* character alternates with circular medallions with displayed birds. The latter Dr. Bushell described as phoenixes and based thereon the suggestion that they furnished an indication of the screen having been made for an Empress. With all deference to so distinguished an authority, we think they are to be recognised as storks, the emblem entirely appropriate to the subject as being symbolical of long life. At the foot of each panel is one of the "Flowers of the Twelve Months," while the remainder of the border is occupied with vases and baskets of flowers and ancient bronze utensils. Outside all is a double band of a running pattern of lotus and scrolls and of thunder-fret alternately. The reverse of this screen is decorated with rectangular compartments with representations of figure subjects; landscapes; birds, flowers and fruit; the symbols of the Four Liberal Arts (writing, painting, music and *Wei Chi*—the game known to the Japanese as *Gō* and generally, but inaccurately described as chess); and sacred relics and emblems both of the Buddhist and Taoist cults. The colouring of this remarkable work is very fine, the prevailing hues being red, blue, bright green and white on a rich brown-black ground. The landscapes, of which Plate 51 reproduces an example, are particularly effective, relying mainly on strong line and mass with a masterly reticence and elimination of unnecessary detail. Dr. Bushell attributes this screen and also that next to be dealt with in this volume to the period of Ch'ien Lung; but the free and vigorous treatment of the principal themes of decoration inclines us to give both a somewhat earlier date.

Height, 8 feet 2½ inches; width, 19 feet 3 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Plate 51

Landscape from the reverse of the above screen, Plate 50.

Plate 52

Two vases of flowers and two "Flowers of the Months"—(Lotus, July, and Chrysanthemum, October) from the border of Plate 50.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Plate 53.—SCREEN, "COROMANDEL" LACQUER (FOUR PANELS)

The second of the two screens at Kensington is of importance at least equal to that of the first and, in artistic merit, its superior. Here we have a coherent composition executed with breadth and simplicity in detail,

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

and yet astonishingly rich in its general decorative effect. In the centre of the main picture is a group of old pine-trees with many flowers. On its right is an ancient sea from the waves of which rises, on banks of cloud, a two-storied pavilion representing the Taoist Paradise, *T'ien T'ang*. Over the crest of the waves gambols the dragon-headed horse (*lung ma*) while the divine tortoise (*shên kuei*) rises amid them—on each are magical arithmetical squares. The sacred jewel, *artemisia* leaf, double cash and coral are also seen, while a stork wheels in the air above. On the left, a pair of dappled deer recline near a rock covered with flowers on the bank of a gentle stream near which are pairs of pheasants, mandarin ducks and other birds. Around this is a broad border on which is represented the whole of the "Hundred Antiques" (*po ku*) within narrow bands of dragons and of lotus and scrolls respectively. On the reverse are two rows of rectangular and fan-shaped compartments, alternately, with landscapes and poems written in various kinds of script, also within a border of emblems and antiques, with bands of phoenixes and dragons with scrolled tails and the *shou* character. In this screen a liberal use has been made of gold, and the ornament is in relief as well as incised. The ground is a rich black, and the chief colours are a brilliant turquoise blue, wine-colour, several shades of green, rose-pink and white. The decoration might almost be said to go far towards providing a compendium of Chinese ornament.

Height, 8 feet 10 inches ; width (whole screen), 21 feet.

Plate 54

Four panels from the reverse of the above screen, Plate 53.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

NOTE.—The objects to which the name of Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd., is appended were selected from the Exhibition held by that firm in June, 1925.

MARKS OF DATE

These marks are read from right to left and from above downwards. In the 6-character marks the two first characters, beginning at the top right hand corner, are those of the dynasty; then come two giving the name of the Emperor; and, lastly, two reading "period" and "made." In the case of the 4-character marks, those signifying the dynasty are omitted. The marks now reproduced are those of most importance in the case of lacquer.

MING DYNASTY

1. Hung Wu (1368-1398).
2. Yung Lo (1403-1424).
3. Dai Ming Hsüan Te (1426-1435).
4. Dai Ming Ch'êng Hua (1465-1487).
5. Dai Ming Hung Chih (1488-1505).
6. Dai Ming Chêng Tê (1506-1521).
7. Dai Ming Chia Ching (1522-1566).
8. Dai Ming Lung Ch'ing (1567-1572).
9. Dai Ming Wan Li (1573-1619).
10. Dai Ming T'ien Ch'i (1621-1627).
11. Ch'ung Chên (1628-1643).

CH'ING (OR MANCHU) DYNASTY

12. Dai Ch'ing Shun Chih (1644-1661).
13. Dai Ch'ing K'ang Hsi (1662-1722).
14. Dai Ch'ing Yung Chêng (1723-1735).
15. Dai Ch'ing Ch'ien Lung (1736-1795).
16. Chia Ch'ing (1796-1820).

CHINESE LACQUER

DATE MARKS

年 洪
製 武

1.

年 永
製 樂

2.

德 大
年 明
製 宣

3.

化 大
年 明
製 成

4.

治 大
年 明
製 弘

5.

德 大
年 明
製 正

6.

靖 大
年 明
製 嘉

7.

慶 大
年 明
製 隆

8.

曆 大
年 明
製 萬

9.

啟 大
年 明
製 天

10.

年 崇
製 禎

11.

治 大
年 清
製 順

12.

熙 大
年 清
製 康

13.

正 大
年 清
製 雍

14.

隆 大
年 清
製 乾

15.

年 嘉
製 慶

16.

MOTIVES OF DECORATION

PA PAO. THE EIGHT PRECIOUS THINGS



CHU.
A Jewel.



CH'IEN.
A "Cash."



FANG-SHENG.
A Lozenge.



SHU.
A Pair of Books.



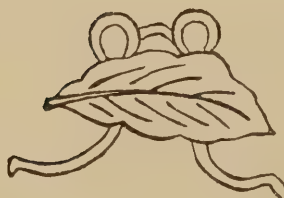
HUA.
A Painting.



CH'ING.
A Musical Stone.



CHÜEH.
A Pair of Rhinoceros-horn Cups.



AI-YEH.
An Artemisia Leaf.

PA CHI-HSIANG

THE EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS OF HAPPY AUGURY



LUN.
The Wheel in Flames.



LO.
A Conch-Shell.



SAN.
The State Umbrella.



KAI.
A Canopy.



HUA.
Lotus Flower.



P'ING.
Vase.



YU.
A Pair of Fish.



CHANG.
Entrails or Endless Knot.

SUNDRY



SVASTIKA.
In a Lozenge.



LING CHIH.
Sacred Fungus.



FU.
One of the 12 Ancient
Embroidery Patterns.

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PLATES

PLATE I

Imperial TABLE for a marriage ceremony. In carved red lacquer cut through on the upper surface to a buff ground. Height, 2 ft. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; table top, 2 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. by 3 ft. 11 in. Ming Dynasty (Wan Li).

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PLATE II

Detail (TABLE TOP) of Plate I, showing Dragon and
Phoenix decoration.



PLATE III

Table SCREEN, of carved red lacquer in carved stand
of hard wood with small enamel plaques.
Height, 23 in. ; width, 16 in. Ming Dynasty
(Hsüan Te, dated).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



PLATE IV

BOX in two tiers, cover and side, in carved red lacquer.
Height, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; width, $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; depth, 6 in.
Ming Dynasty (*probably* Wan Li).
Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE V

SALVER, in carved red lacquer with gilt metal rim.
Height, 3 in.; diameter, 16 in. Ming
Dynasty (*late*). *Victoria and Albert Museum.*



PLATE VI

COVER of Circular Bowl, in carved brown lacquer on plain buff ground; the centre with diaper of rich reddish-brown within a circle of gold lacquer. Height, 8 in.; diameter, 10 in. Ming Dynasty (*late*). *Victoria and Albert Museum.*



PLATE VII

(Upper). Octagonal Covered BOWL on foot, in carved red lacquer, the lower part on a ground of yellowish buff. Height, $10\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ming Dynasty (Wan Li).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

(Lower). BOX for Incense, carved in solid brown lacquer. Ming Dynasty (Ch'êng Tè).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE VIII

(Left.) BOX for an Imperial gift, in carved black lacquer
on red diapered ground with silver mounts.
Height, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length, 25 in. ; width, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Ming Dynasty (Wan Li).

Victoria and Albert Museum;

(Right.) TRAY, in carved red lacquer. Ming Dynasty
(late).

Victoria and Albert Museum;



PLATE IX

Set of ALTAR FURNITURE, in carved red, green
and orange-vermilion lacquer. Height of
Incense Burner (in centre), 18 in. Ming
Dynasty (*late*).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

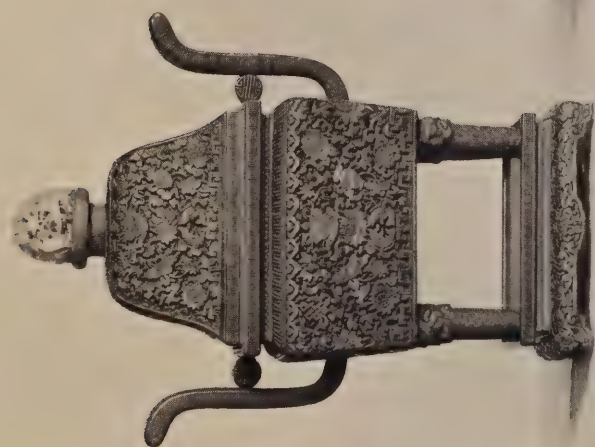




PLATE X

INCENSE BURNER from the set figured in Plate IX,
showing carved jade finial.



PLATE XI

Circular PLAQUE, framed for a Table Screen. In carved red lacquer cut through to black and yellow; the mount of hard wood with border in relief and angles filled with incised work inlaid with green. Diameter, $8\frac{1}{8}$ in. Ming Dynasty (about Chia Ching).
Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XII

(Upper.) Circular BOX for Ceremonial Gift. In carved red lacquer, the interior flat gold. Height, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, 18 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

(Lower.) BOX for Sweetmeats, Bat-shaped. In carved red lacquer. Height, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.; depth, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XIII

BOX and COVER, Peach-shaped. In carved red lacquer encrusted with jade, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and amethystine quartz; the interior in gold lacquer with decoration in low relief. Height, 7 in.; width, 15 in.; length, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XIV

TABLE with grape-vine pattern. In carved red
lacquer. Height, width, and length, 2 ft.
9½ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).
Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



PLATE XV

Garden BOX-SEAT. In carved red and green lacquer
on buff the band of nipples in red on
incised buff. Height, 18 in.; in section,
15½ in. square. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



PLATE XVI

FLOWER-VASE for ceremonial use. In carved red lacquer, the neck on diapered ground of olive-green and base of plain dark green lacquer on buff. The stand of carved hard wood. Height, $28\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, $16\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



PLATE XVII

VASE from the Summer Palace (A.D. 1860). In carved
red lacquer with engraved gilt brass mount.
Height $37\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, $23\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing
Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung). *Victoria and Albert Museum.*



PLATE XVIII

PANEL, The Taoist Paradise. In carved red lacquer, encrusted with jade, malachite, and imitation lapis lazuli. Height, 2 ft. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, 3 ft. 7 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XIX

A pair of JARS with covers. In deeply-cut carved
red lacquer. Height, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter,
 $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE XX

STAND for Crystal Ball. In carved red lacquer,
partly solid and partly on basis of wood.
On carved hard-wood stand. Height, 18 in.;
diameter, 6 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien
Lung).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



VASE for Imperial gift. In carved red lacquer on
porcelain, with engraved brass mount to
rim. Height, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



PLATE XXII

BOX for Jewels. In carved olive-green lacquer.
Height, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; length, 8 in.; width, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XXIII

Imperial CHAIR OF STATE. In carved red lacquer, the border of the panel at back, in red on green ground. The foot-rail has a covering plate of engraved bronze. Height, 37 in.; depth, 21½ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



Imperial Three-fold SCREEN. The inscriptions in carved red lacquer on carved brown diapered ground. The reverse side in flat gold on black. The frame and stand of polished hard wood. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.



御製四川蓬州古歲壽民張子翼五
也同堂詩以賜之
西川特地報嘉祥祈慶踵齡人姓張
一老百年登壽秩天孫五代壽同堂
太蘇元氣
天麻沐靈宇際春
祖德昌隆此蘇源仁壽也益風禮係
金壽建

壽民張子翼五
也同堂詩以賜之
西川特地報嘉祥祈慶踵齡人姓張
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一老百年登壽秩天孫五代壽同堂
太蘇元氣
天麻沐靈宇際春
祖德昌隆此蘇源仁壽也益風禮係
金壽建

PLATE XXV

Imperial STAND for Fruit or Flowers. In carved red lacquer with under layers of green and buff. Height, $36\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, $16\frac{3}{4}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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PLATE XXVI

PANEL, landscape, for wall decoration. The design in carved red lacquer; the sky diapered in carved brown and the water in black touched with dark green lacquer. Height, 5 ft. 3 in.; width, 3 ft. 2 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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PLATE XXVII

VASE, one of a pair. In carved red lacquer cut through to green and buff. Height, 15½ in.; diameter, 8½ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE XXVIII

THRONE of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (back view).
For front see Frontispiece.



(Upper.) Covered BOWL for Ceremonial Gift. In carved lacquer of red, green, buff, and aubergine. Height, 5 in.; diameter, 21 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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(Lower, left.) BOX for Incense. In carved red solid lacquer. Height, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in.; width, $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.; length, $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

(Lower, right.) BOX for Incense. In carved red and brown lacquer. Height, 2 in.; width, $4\frac{3}{8}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE XXX

BOWL of Woven Bamboo with central panel in flat lacquer of gold, red, green, slate-blue, and white on rich crimson ground. Height, $5\frac{7}{8}$ in.; diameter, $11\frac{1}{4}$ in. Ming Dynasty (Wan Li).

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PLATE XXXI

SAUCERS for Wine Cups. From a set of five in flat gold and red on black lacquer ground on a basis of finely woven bamboo. Height, $\frac{5}{8}$ in.; diameter, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. Ming Dynasty (*late*).

From the Collection of James Orange, Esq.



Set of BOXES for Sweetmeats. In gold and silver lacquer, the decoration in relief. Height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in.; average width, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ming Dynasty (late).

From the Collection of Dr. W. Perceval Yetts.

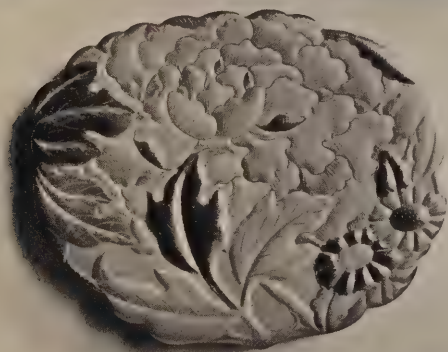


PLATE XXXIII

PANEL from a four-fold screen. In gold, red, and brown lacquer, both flat and in high relief, encrusted with ivory, shell, and hard stones. Height, 3 ft. 2½ in.; width, 1 ft. 9 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XXXIV

SCREEN (three panels). In flat lacquer of vermilion, blue, green, orange, brown, black, and white. Height, 7 ft. 3 in.; width (each panel, 1 ft. 8½ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

From the Collection of Ernest Rennie, Esq.



PLATE XXXV

SCREEN (cresting and portion of one panel) made for the Emperor Leopold I. In flat lacquer of gold on warm red ground. Height, 6 ft. 7 in.; width (each panel), 1 ft. 9 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

From a photograph lent by R. Freeman Smith, Esq.



CABINET. In gold and silver lacquer in relief on dark wine-coloured ground, with mounts of chased, gilt bronze. The drawers in gold in relief on gold-lacquer ground. Height, $10\frac{3}{4}$ in.; width, $13\frac{3}{8}$ in.; depth, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi, early).

From the Collection of James Orange, Esq.



PLATE XXXVII

STAND of Picnic Set, in cream, red, and purple,
with foliage in green flat lacquer. $8\frac{1}{4}$ in.
square. (*See also* Plate XXXVIII.) Ch'ing
Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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PLATE XXXVIII

PICNIC SET, on stand. In coral red, cream, green and white flat lacquer, within a cover, with open sides, of carved red lacquer. Height, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (*See also* Plate XXXVII.) Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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PLATE XXXIX

NEST of Sweetmeat Dishes. In flat gold on blue
lacquer ground. Height, 1 in.; diameter,
13 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE XL

PANEL for Wall Decoration. The ornament in inlaid shell, engraved, and the lines filled in with colour, on ground of red lacquer. 40½ in. square. Ming Dynasty (*late*).

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PLATE XLI

EWER for Ceremonial use. In black lacquer on pewter, encrusted with shell, ivory, carved red lacquer and lacquer composition. Height, 14 in.; width, 7 in.; depth, 4½ in. Ming Dynasty (Wan Li). Panels restored in Ch'ien Lung period.

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XLII

EWER for Temple use. In lac *burgautée* of gold, silver,
and shell on black, with chased silver-gilt
mounts. Height, 20 in.; diameter, 5½ in.
Ming Dynasty (*late*).
Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XLIII

PANEL for Wall Decoration. In closely worked
iridescent shell, inlaid in black lacquer.
Height, 13 in.; width, 18 in. Ming
Dynasty (*late*).

Victoria and Albert Museum.

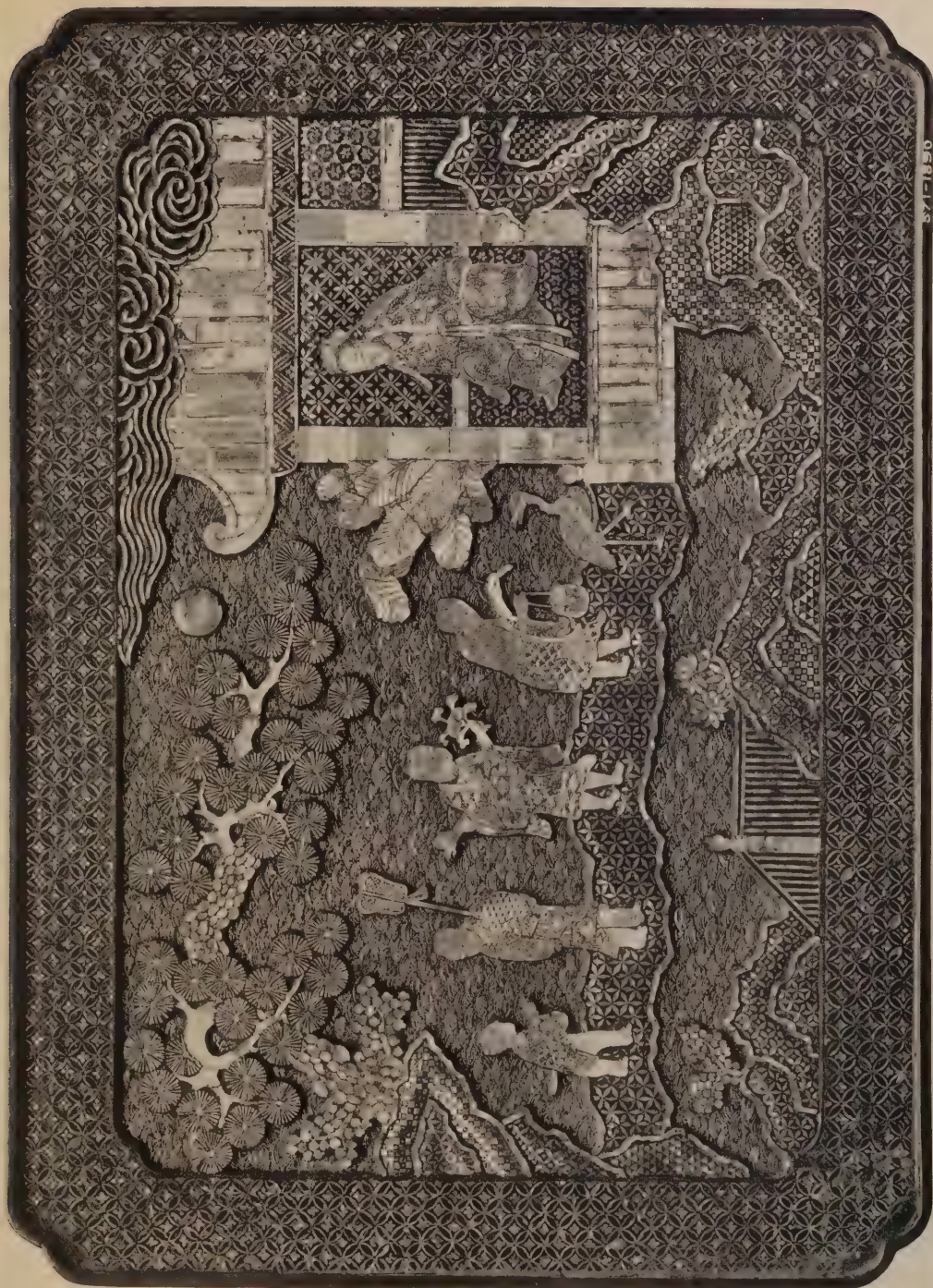


PLATE XLIV

DOOR of Cabinet; in lac *burgautée* of green, gold, and reddish-purple shell, inlaid in black lacquer. With chased bronze hasp. Height, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

From the Collection of W. Reynolds Stephens, Esq.



VASE. In lac *burgantée* of green and reddish-purple
on black lacquer ground, on porcelain.
Height, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien
Lung).

From the Collection of W. Reynolds Stephens, Esq.



PLATE XLVI

BEAKER. In incised lacquer of brown, green, red
and dull yellow, touched with gold, on
porcelain. Height, 13½ in. Ming Dynasty.

British Museum.



PLATE XLVII

Circular PLAQUE. In incised lacquer of vermillion, crimson, purple, brown, and yellow. Diameter, $17\frac{1}{4}$ in. Ming Dynasty (*late*).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE XLVIII

A pair of CUPS and a BOWL, of carved lacquer in layers of black and red, in the style called *guri* by the Japanese. Ming Dynasty [the Cups]. Height, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi) [Bowl]. Height, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE XLIX

TRAYS. Foo-chow lacquer in delicately shaded green and brown powdered with gold and silver dust. Height, $3\frac{1}{8}$ in.; width, 11 in.; depth, $9\frac{1}{8}$ in. 19th century (middle).

*From the Collection of Mrs. Cooper and the
Victoria and Albert Museum.*

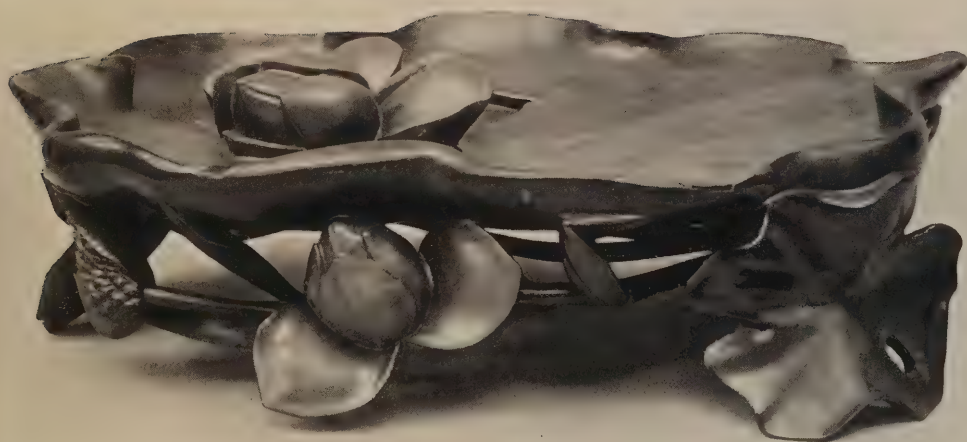


PLATE L

Twelve-fold SCREEN. In "Coromandel" lacquer with colour decoration of red, blue, bright green, white, etc., on rich brown-black ground. Height, 8 ft. 2½ in.; width (over all), 19 ft. 3 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi).

Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE LI

LANDSCAPE—panel from the Screen illustrated in
Plate L.



PLATE LII

PANELS of Flowers from the Screen illustrated in
Plate L.



PANELS (4) from a Twelve-fold Screen of "Coromandel" lacquer, the decoration in turquoise-blue, wine-colour, green, rose-pink, and white, etc., on black ground. Height, 8 ft. 10 in.; width (over all), 21 ft. Ch'ing Dynasty (K'ang Hsi). *Victoria and Albert Museum.*

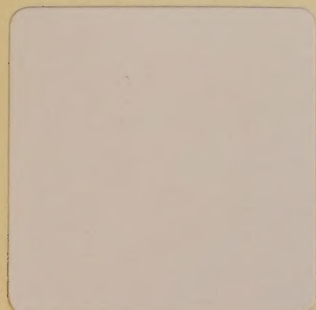


PLATE LIV

PANELS (4) from the reverse side of the "Coromandel" Screen figured in Plate LIII. In gold and colours, incised and in relief.



HAN-SHAN TANG Ltd.
717 Fulham Road,
London SW6 5UL,
Telephone 01-731 2447



GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



3 3125 01645 0401

E. WEYHE
794 LEXINGTON AV
NEW YORK

